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Autumn Colour

Perfect ideas for
Shady gardens

How to plant for
Winter harvests

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15 great trees for FRONT GARDENS

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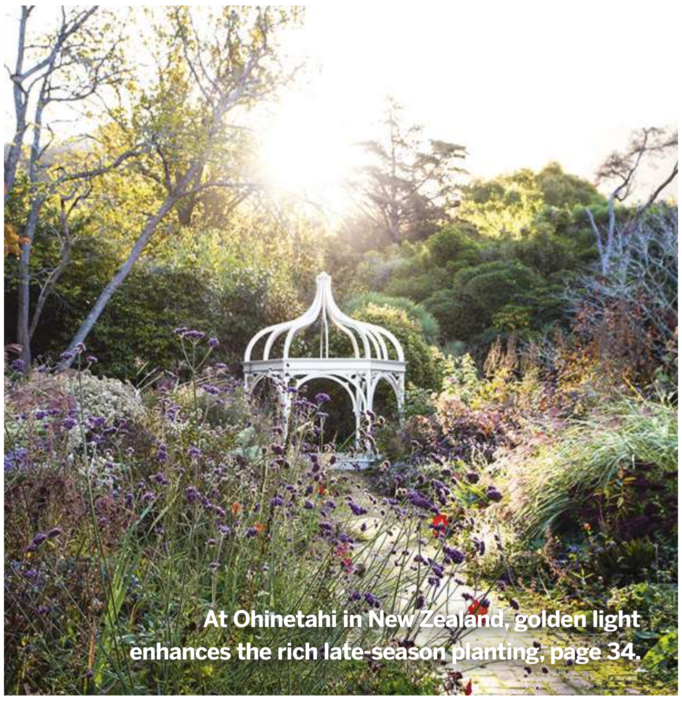
editor's letter

Discovering plants that will give your garden a triumphant blast of colour before winter really takes hold is fairly easy. There are numerous books on the subject and of course the internet, which always throws up plenty of ideas. However, to find out which are the very best plants, you can't beat personal recommendations, particularly if it's from a highly regarded nurseryman such as Hans Kramer. Hans describes ten of his seasonal favourites on page 22, and we also visit some wonderful private gardens (in Belgium, the Netherlands and New Zealand on pages 72, 42 and 34 respectively) for further inspiration. I've been looking for a good tree for my front garden for some time now and am determined to plant one this winter. I've been faffing around, undecided, for far too long, so I asked Tony Kirkham, head of arboriculture at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for his advice. Tony has chosen 15 fine examples (page 58), so now I've just got to whittle these down to one. Careful preparation and planning invariably pays off in gardening, particularly with the vegetable plot. Organic grower Charles Dowding, renowned for his no-dig approach, recommends his favourite winter-cropping vegetables, as well as offering some delicious, wholesome recipes. For me, gardening and art go hand in hand so I was fascinated to see artist Aimee Baldwin's botanical specimens made of crepe paper. Looking at plants in great detail is a great way of learning more about their habit and if you don't fancy braving the cold, what better way of continuing to enjoy them? I hope you enjoy the issue.

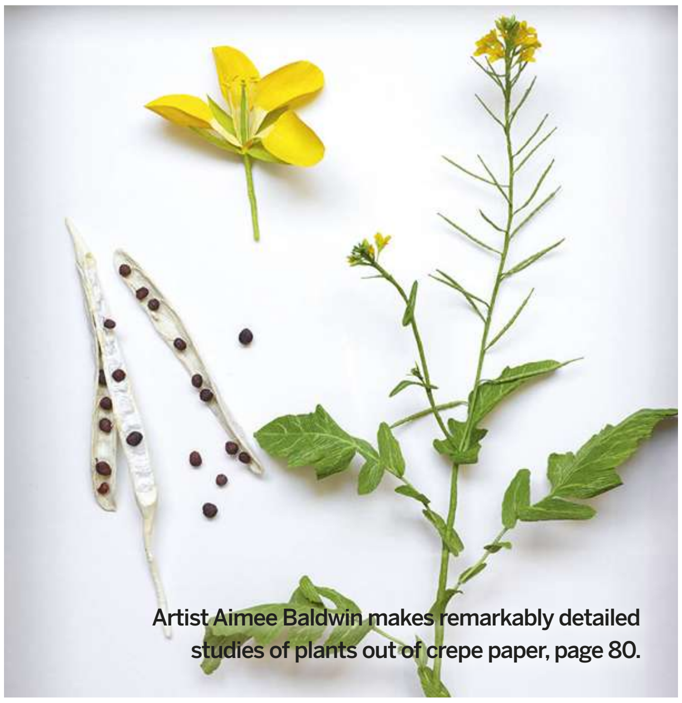
Juliet

GARDENS
ILLUSTRATED
Autumn Colour
15 great trees for FRONT GARDENS

Save money when you **subscribe to the digital edition** – see page 32



At Ohinetahi in New Zealand, golden light enhances the rich late-season planting, page 34.



Artist Aimee Baldwin makes remarkably detailed studies of plants out of crepe paper, page 80.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

FERGUS GARRETT
Plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex.

CAROL KLEIN
Plantswoman and presenter of BBC *Gardeners' World*.

DANIEL J HINKLEY
American plantsman, planthunter, horticultural writer and lecturer.

ALYS FOWLER
Kew-trained gardener, author and television presenter.

DAN PEARSON
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

CLAIRE TAKACS, MARION BRENNER

contents NOVEMBER 2015

ON THE COVER

Autumn colour pages 22, 34, 42, 72

Trees for front gardens page 58

Shady gardens page 90

Winter harvests page 66

Stylish fire pits page 95

COVER IMAGE

Ohinetahi
Photography by
Claire Takacs

Plants

22 **Plantsman's favourites** Hans Kramer, co-owner of the Dutch nursery De Hessenhof, selects his favourite plants for November

50 **Final flourish** In the last part of his series, Matthew Reese creates three colour-rich containers to brighten up autumn days

58 **Plant profile: trees for front gardens** Tony Kirkham suggests some of the best trees to plant in a front garden and discusses the considerations needed to make the right choice

Places

34 **Shaken not stirred** When the beautiful garden of Ohinetahi was hit by the devastating New Zealand earthquake of 2010 it offered its owner the architect Sir Miles Warren the opportunity to perfect his Arts and Crafts masterpiece

42 **Infinity and beyond** As their children grew up, Frank and Annelies Naber called on Harry Pierik to help redesign their football-friendly garden into one with flower-filled borders and fluid lines that could hint at infinite space

72 **Playing with space** Discover a Flemish garden where the owners have given topiary a quirky twist, creating a space with great structure and also open to the landscape beyond

People

56 **Who's who** Richard Deverell, the current and fifteenth director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, discusses the challenges he's faced while turning around the garden's fortunes

66 **A wholesome harvest** Organic, no-dig, vegetable grower Charles Dowding explains how to prepare your garden for growing winter vegetables and shares some delicious recipes

ANDREW MONTGOMERY, MARION BRENNER

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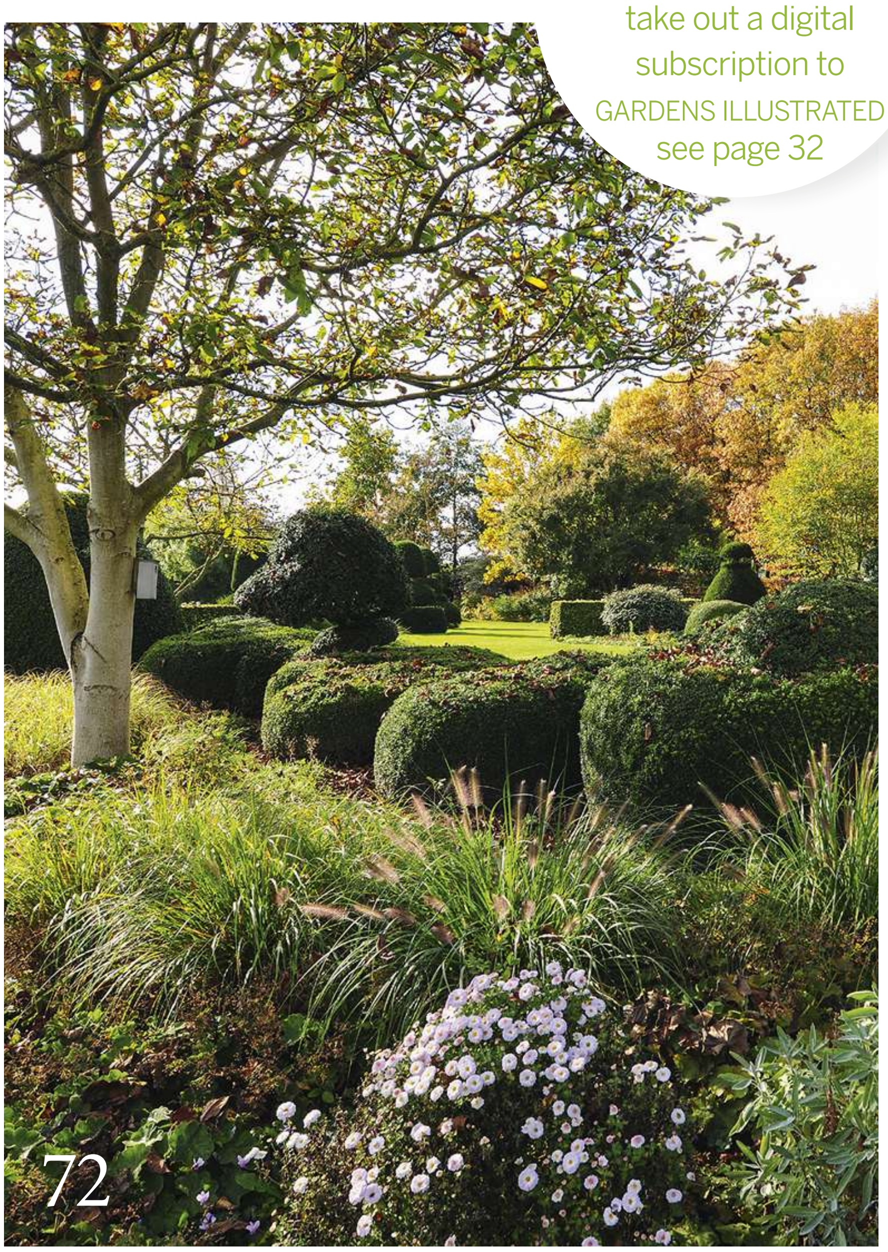

80 **Paper perfection** Californian artist Aimee Baldwin uses crepe paper to create lifelike interpretations of flowers, insects and birds

114 **A new light** As the quality of light changes with the season, Frank resolves to find delight in the subtle beauty of his winter plants

Design

85 **Design update** What's new in garden design, including winners of the annual Gardenista Considered Design Awards

90 **Design ideas: bringing shady corners to life** Designer Sarah Price explains how you can inject magic and colour into even the shadiest, driest areas of the garden

95 **Design sourcebook** Whether you're planning a bonfire night party or simply want to make the most of autumn evenings in the garden, these stylish fire pits are sure to give you a warm glow

ANDREW MONTGOMERY, SIETSKE DE VRIES

Regulars

3 **Editor's letter**

6 **Contributors**

13 **Dig in** What's happening and what to buy this month, including Wild About Gardens Week

19 **Get kitted out** for winter gardening

27 **Gardener cook** This month, Jojo suggests ways to invite wildlife into your garden this winter

31 **Gardening talent** Meet vegetable grower Alice Holden who manages the inspiring two-acre Growing Communities' market garden in Dagenham, east London

32 **Subscription offer** Save money when you take out a subscription to the digital edition

99 **Books** Our pick of the latest gardening books

104 **Crossword and how to buy back issues**

105 **Shop** With Christmas in mind, find out what's on offer in the *Gardens Illustrated* online shop

113 **Next issue** What's coming up in December

EVENTS AND OFFERS

- See the line-up for the ***Gardens Illustrated* Festival 2016** – page 8; plus book your place on our exclusive reader holiday to **Alsace and Rhineland** – page 10 – led by plantsman and writer Noël Kingsbury
- Save money when you **subscribe to the digital edition** – see page 32
- **Browse** the *Gardens Illustrated* shop – page 105

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contributors

CHARLES DOWDING

A modern pioneer of no-dig, organic growing, Charles crops an intensive quarter acre for sales of salad leaves and vegetables. Winter harvests are one of his specialities and on page 66 he and Stephanie Hafferty show us how to grow and prepare excellent food.

"Planning is essential to reap the benefits of a winter harvest – it's important to start planning now for next year's crop."

CHRISTINE REID

Christine is a garden writer who has recently moved to a new garden in the cool hills, north of Melbourne, Australia. Although the blank canvas is more of a challenge than she anticipated, she finds it an exciting learning curve. On page 34 she visits the New Zealand garden, Ohinetahi.

"My visit to New Zealand to meet Sir Miles Warren was inspiring; he's a real star in the art of gardening."

TONY KIRKHAM

Tony is head of Arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where he manages the 14,000 trees in the woody collections. On page 58 he recommends 15 great trees that are especially suited to front gardens and offers advice on how to choose the right one.

"The front garden is often a forgotten about and underused space that we can make better use of by including good plants."

MARION BRENNER

Marion spent much of 2014 criss-crossing the USA, photographing 50 private and public gardens for the Garden Conservancy's new book to celebrate its 25th anniversary. For our feature on page 80 she only had to travel across town to the fascinating studio of Aimee Baldwin.

"It was wonderful to have the opportunity to watch Aimee at work and being able to look closely at her beautiful creations."

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USA/CANADA GILcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com
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✉ **UK/REST OF THE WORLD** *Gardens Illustrated*, Subscriptions, Dovetail Services, PO Box 279, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8DF.
USA/CANADA *Gardens Illustrated*, PO BOX 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495 USA.

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

☎ +44 (0)117 933 8072 🖱 kevin.taylor@immediate.co.uk

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

☎ +44 (0)117 314 7440 🖱 gardens@gardensillustrated.com

✉ *Gardens Illustrated*, Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited,
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☎ +44 (0)117 314 8782 🖱 emma.brunt@immediate.co.uk

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MAGAZINE CONTACTS

EDITORIAL	
Editor	Juliet Roberts
Contributing editors	Alys Fowler, Fergus Garrett, Daniel J Hinkley, Carol Klein and Dan Pearson
Art director	David Grenham
Deputy editor	Sorrel Everton
Deputy art editor	Niki Goss
Production editor	Juliet Giles
Designer	Liam McAuley
Editorial assistant	Alys Hurn
Botanical adviser	Dr James Compton
Thanks this issue	Chris Jones, Siobhan Kelly, Rosanna Morris
ADVERTISING	
Advertising manager	Kevin Taylor **0117 933 8072** kevin.taylor@immediate.co.uk
Brand sales executive	Olivia Charlesworth **0117 314 8361** olivia.charlesworth@immediate.co.uk
USA advertising representative	Kate Buckley buckley@buckleypell.com
Advertising designer	Matt Gynn
INSERTS	
Laurence Robertson	+353 (0)876 902208
CIRCULATION, MARKETING, PRESS & PR	
Newstrade manager	Rob Brock
Subscriptions Director	Jacky Perales-Morris
Direct Marketing Manager	Julie Sewell
Press officer	Carolyn Wray **0117 314 8812**
MANAGEMENT	
Chairman	Stephen Alexander
Chief executive officer	Tom Bureau
Managing director, Bristol	Andy Marshall
Publisher	Marie Davies
Publishing assistant	Rosa Sherwood
SYNDICATION AND LICENSING	
Director of licensing and syndication	Tim Hudson
PRODUCTION	
Production director	Sarah Powell
Production co-ordinator	Emily Mounter

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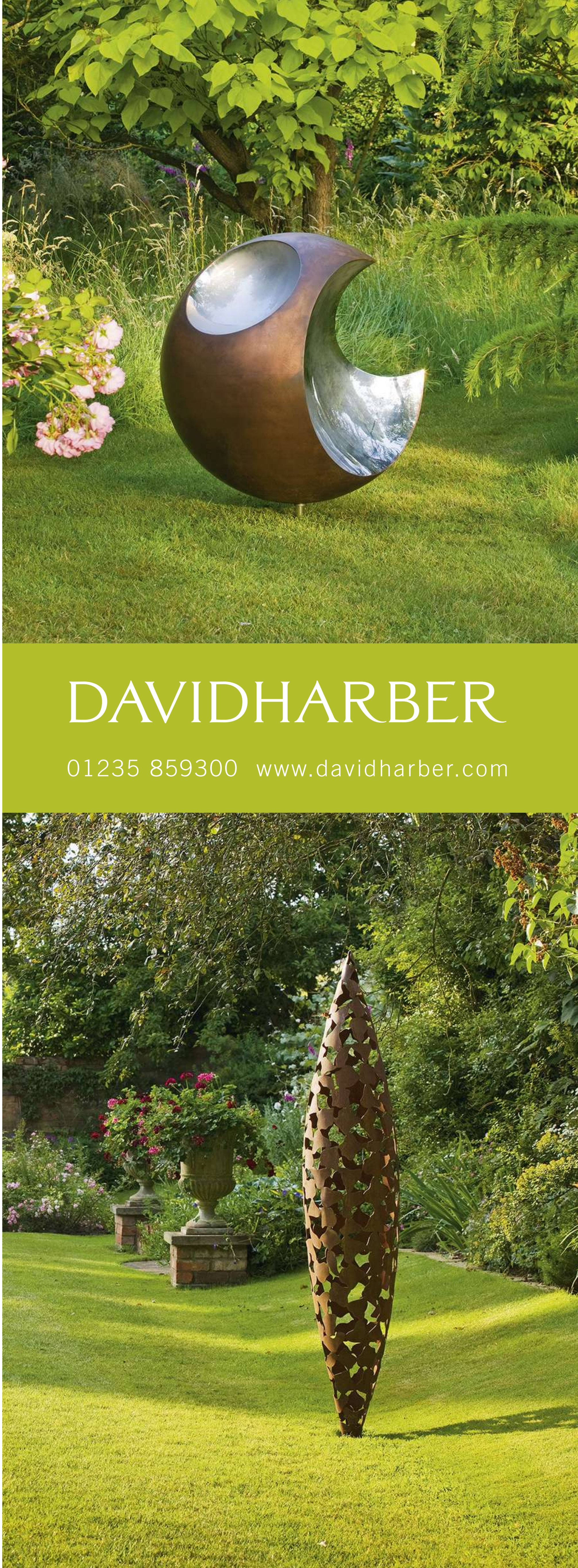

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Festival

22-23 April 2016, Tetbury, Gloucestershire

Make a date to join us at our Festival to celebrate gardens, gardening, plants and design

Join us for the second *Gardens Illustrated* Festival, now in the beautiful Cotswold town of Tetbury. Taking place over the weekend of 22-23 April 2016, the festival will once again gather together an eclectic and exciting line-up of speakers – offering a fascinating programme of talks on a range of horticultural topics.

Building on the success of last year's event, we have moved location from Malmesbury to the nearby and the equally charming Cotswold town of Tetbury, allowing for more festival activities in one place. Alongside the talks there will be a marquee selling a fine selection of plants and gardening goods from some of our favourite companies and artisan makers. You'll also find our garden plant and design clinic offering individual advice, a series of workshops, and freshly made teas, coffees and lunches.

And, as with last year, we'll also be organising guided tours of local gardens.

Confirmed speakers for 2016 include: Arne Maynard, Cleve West, Roy Lancaster, Tim Richardson, Mark Diacono, James Alexander-Sinclair, Fergus Garrett, Jinny Blom, Carol Klein, Helen Dillon, Troy Scott Smith, Val Bourne, Matthew Wilson, Marina Christopher and Chris Beardshaw.

Full details of all events and how to book can be found at

gardensfestival.com

2015 FESTIVAL IMAGES BY JASON INGRAM; PORTRAIT OF HELEN DILLON BY JANE SEBIRE

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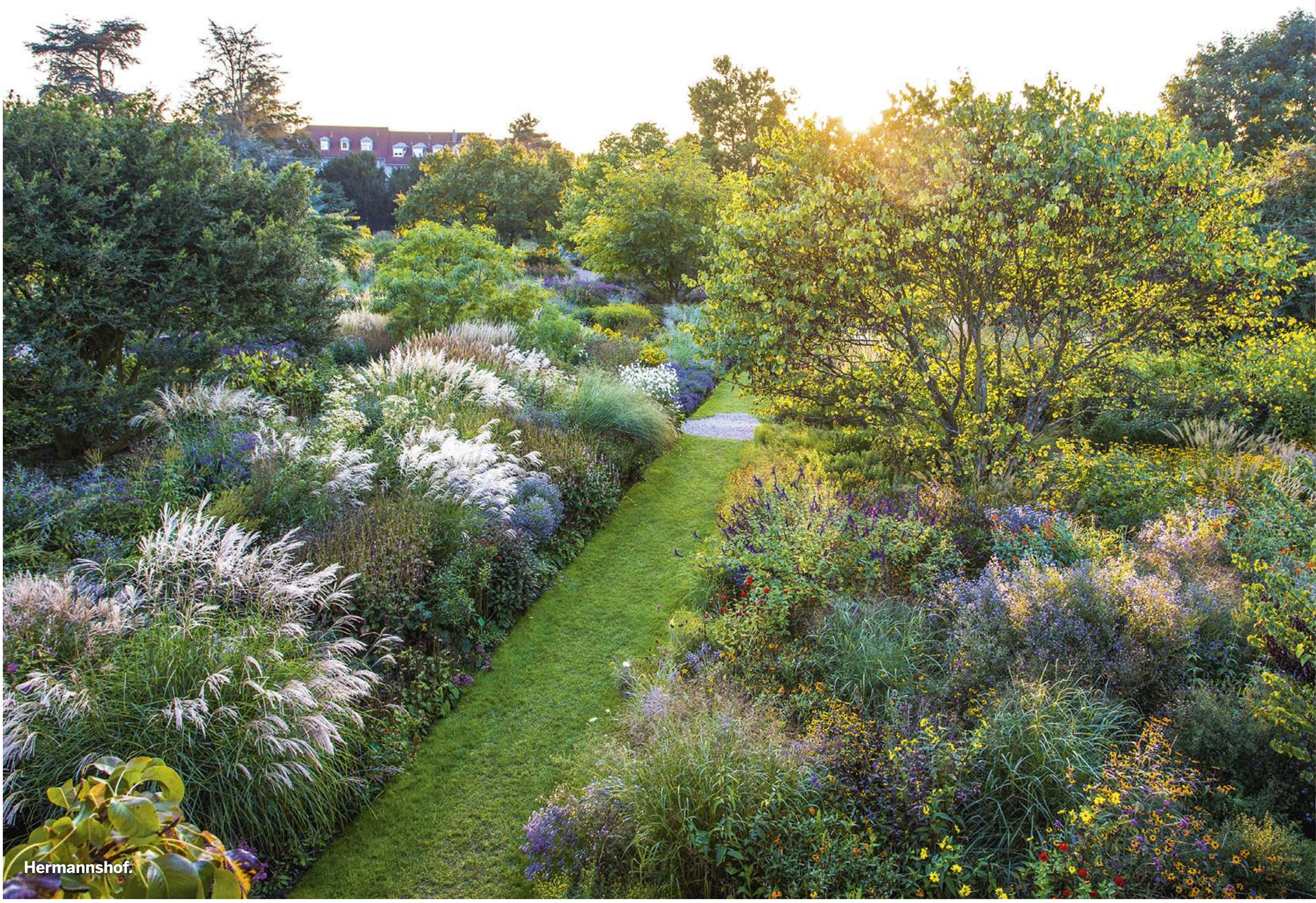
Hermannshof.

11-15 June 2016

Gardens of Alsace and Rhineland

Join writer and plantsman Noël Kingsbury and like-minded *Gardens Illustrated* readers to discover the richly planted gardens that span the borderland areas of Alsace and Rhineland, sharing a unique French and German heritage and character

Tour leader
Dr Noël Kingsbury, garden writer, lecturer and planting designer, is an expert in perennials and planting schemes with a particular interest in continental planting design.

The fertile Rhine river valley cuts between the Vosges Mountains and the Black Forest and forms a natural border between France, Switzerland and the southwesterly corner of Germany, sometimes referred to as the 'Tuscany of Germany'. On this trip we travel northwards, weaving between France and Germany, over an area that's home to a surprisingly rich selection of gardens.

Your five-day tour includes a visit to **Landhaus Ettenbühl**, renowned for its roses, where you will be joined at lunch by the owner and head gardener. You'll also travel into the Vosges Mountains to visit **Jardin d'altitude du Haut Chitelet**, which features lovely alpine planting. At this time of year the wild flowers of the region should also be at their peak, making a visit to the mountains particularly memorable. Nearby is the renowned and atmospheric **Le Jardin de Berchigranges**, set amid mountain forests, it's a garden with a strongly naturalistic feel and huge personality, and was recently featured in *Gardens Illustrated*

Landhaus Ettenbühl.

Schloßgarten Schwetzingen.

Le Jardin de Berchigranges.

Château d'Isenbourg.

[issue 219]. Also featured recently in *Gardens Illustrated* [issue 225], is **Hermannshof** in Weinheim – a real highlight of the tour. It is one of Germany's most exciting public gardens and very much at the forefront of experimental planting design. **Les Jardins de la Ferme Bleue**, designated one of France's *Jardin Remarquable*, is a wonderful example of the region's typical, historic, cobalt-blue-painted architecture, with the farm set in a series of refined and intimate garden rooms. We also visit **Schloßgarten Schwetzingen**, one of the most imposing and complex historical gardens in Germany, now lavishly restored, and offering visitors a fascinating view into the 18th century's intellectual and gardening passions.

During your visit you will stay at **Château d'Isenbourg**, in the vine-clad foothills of the Vosges, and at **Hotel Europäischer Hof**, Heidelberg, where generous hospitality and culinary specialities will contribute to your enjoyment of the region. □

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HERMANNSHOF BY CLAIRE TAKACS

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Dig in

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

NEWS COMPILED BY SORREL EVERTON AND ALYS HURN

ANN&STEVE TOON / GETTY

WILDLIFE

Help solve a prickly problem

In the past ten years, hedgehog numbers in Britain have declined by 30 per cent, with fewer than one million estimated to be left in the UK. To help save this much-loved, spiny mammal, conservation campaign Hedgehog Street has teamed up with the annual Wild About Gardens Week (26 October – 1 November) to raise awareness and highlight ways we can make our gardens and community spaces more hedgehog friendly. Find out more about events and activities at **wildaboutgardensweek.org.uk**. Plus 21 November is The Day of the Hedgehog – with expert talks open to all throughout the day at Telford International Centre. **dayofthehedgehog.eventbrite.co.uk**

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Visits to: Villa Babbianello, Villa Carlotta, Villa Monastero, Isola Bella, Isola Madre
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From £2290 per person

AMALFI COAST, CAPRI AND ISCHIA
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2016: 29 Apr, 12 May, 2 Jun and 15 Sep
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VENETO
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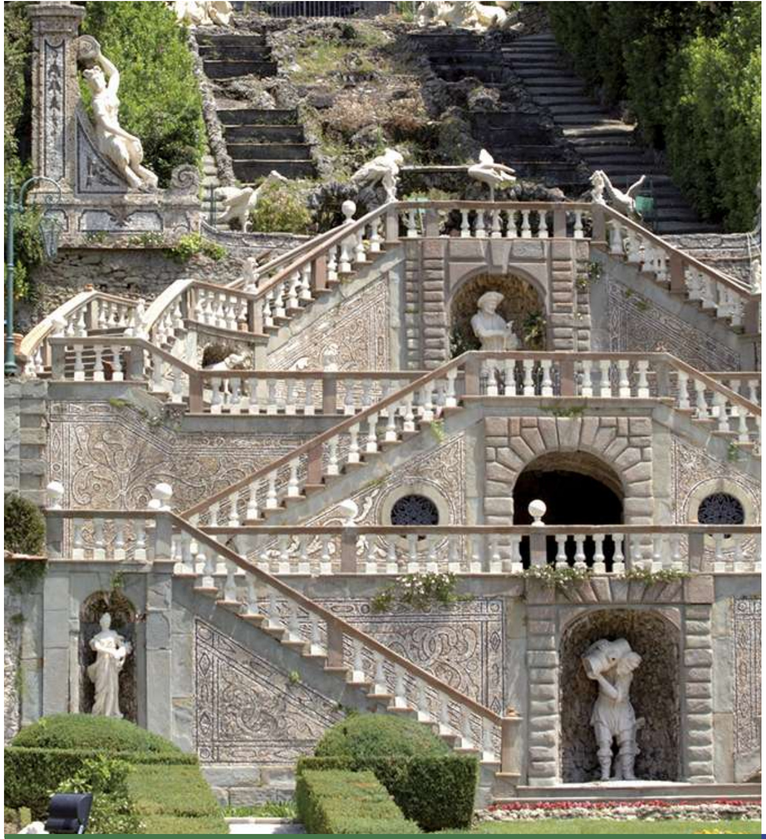
2016: 8 June and 7 Sep
From £2140 per person



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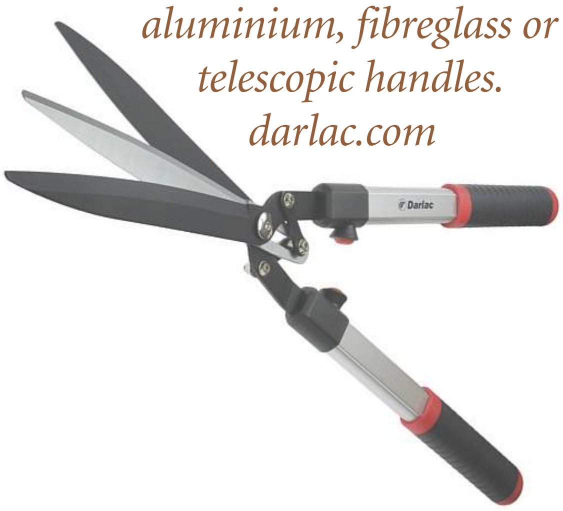
HOME HARVEST

Apples for all

Apple Day on 21 October is always a good reminder that as well as eating fresh harvests, now is the perfect time to plant fruit trees. Try new cultivar 'Core Blimey', a cox-like apple with good disease resistance. Developed by conservation charity Trees for Life in conjunction with the London Urban Orchard Project (which promotes community orchards), the tree is suitable for growing countrywide. Suppliers include fruit specialists Pomona Fruits. **Tel 01255 440410, pomonafruits.co.uk**

Gardening kit

Shortlisted for Chelsea Garden Product of the Year 2015, the Tri-Blade shear from Darlac features a central fixed blade that gives greater stability and allows for faster, and more accurate and efficient cutting. The two outer cutting blades are Teflon coated to reduce friction and increase rust resistance. Available in either aluminium, fibreglass or telescopic handles. darlac.com



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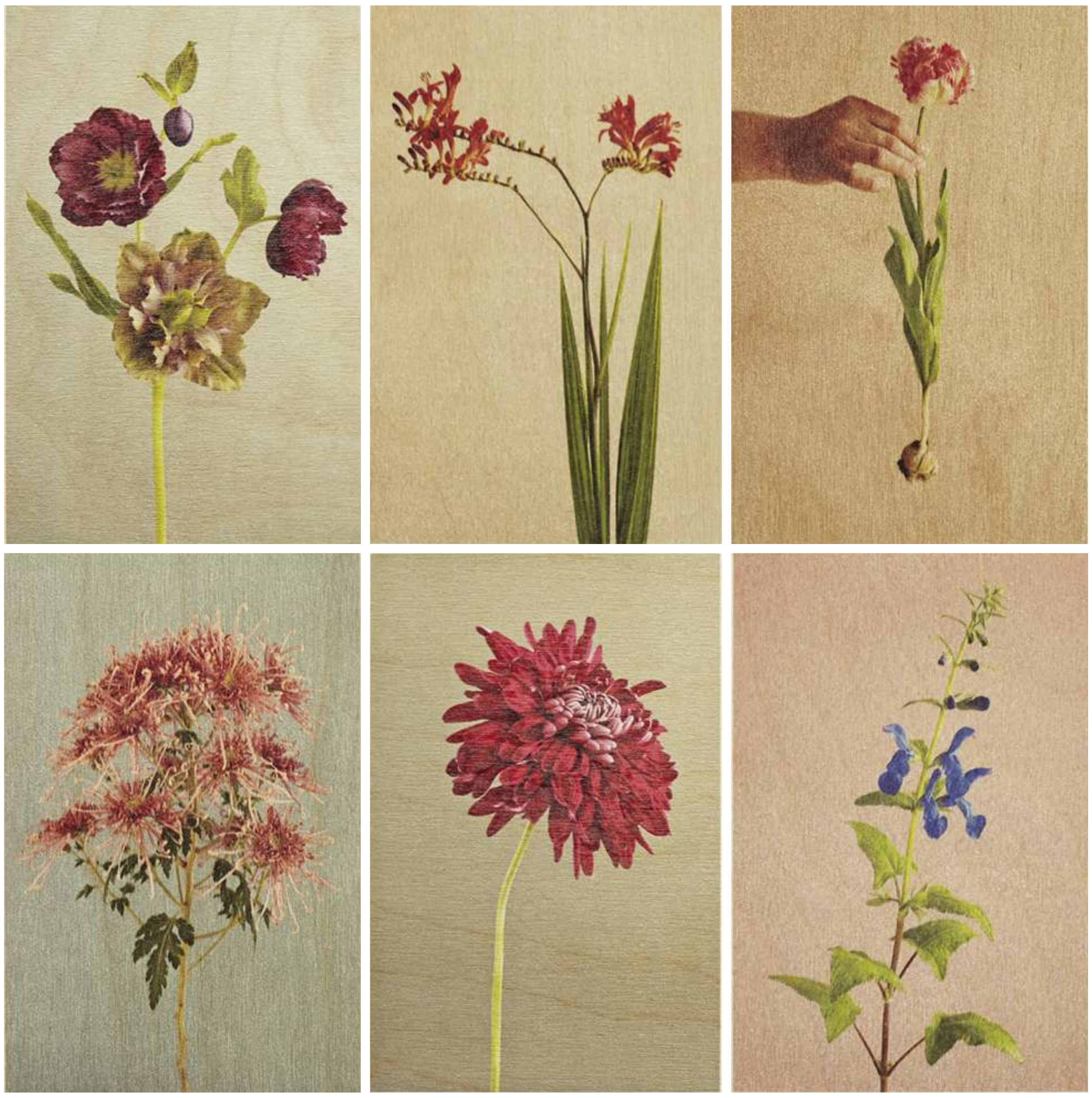


TO BUY

Floral greetings

As well as offering naturally grown flowers for seasonal arrangements, Wiltshire-based florist Electric Daisy Flower Farm has a lovely range of products including these wooden postcards with distinctive floral images taken by photographer Alma Haser. There's a chance you may want to keep these greetings cards for yourself. £25 for a set of six. **Tel 07800 856310, electricdaisyflowerfarm.co.uk**

Bring back the blossom

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is fronting the campaign to restore the iconic Cherry Tree Avenue in London's Regent's Park. The trees, originally planted nearly 40 years ago by the Royal Park's gardeners, had reached the end of their natural lifespan and were removed last February. The Royal Parks Foundation is appealing to the public to help restore the avenue to its former glory by making a donation towards the planting of 100 *Prunus* 'Sunset Boulevard'. To sponsor a cherry tree visit **SupportTheRoyalParks.org/BringBackTheBlossom**

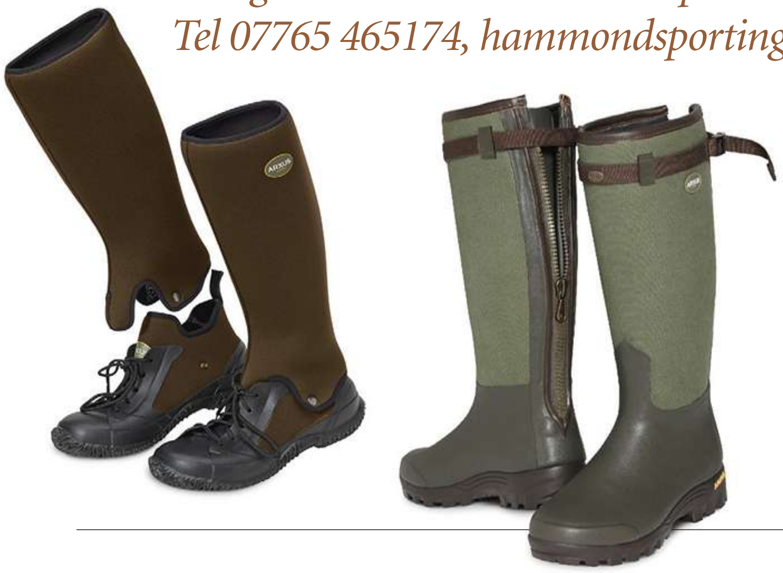
FOR THE HOME

Christmas decorations

Designer and artist Kristy Ramage, whose gorgeous natural craft pieces appear regularly in *Gardens Illustrated*, has created a selection of stylish Christmas decorations for online nursery Crocus. Included in the range are wreaths, rings, stars and swags made from evergreen leaves, such as box, ivy, mistletoe and fir, combined with nigella or poppy seedheads, cones and berries and adorned with ribbons and feathers. Prices range from £6.99 to £69.99 with some of the decorations available as kits for you to assemble yourself. **crocus.co.uk**

Welly weather

Arxus boots, designed in Sweden to cope with the rigours of the environment there, are now available in the UK. This premium brand of sturdy rubber boots offers style, long-lasting quality and comfort. Features include thick rubber soles, rear zips, adjustable straps and a leather top trim. Alongside the boots there's also a stalking shoe with attachable neoprene legs. Tel 07765 465174, hammondsporting.co.uk



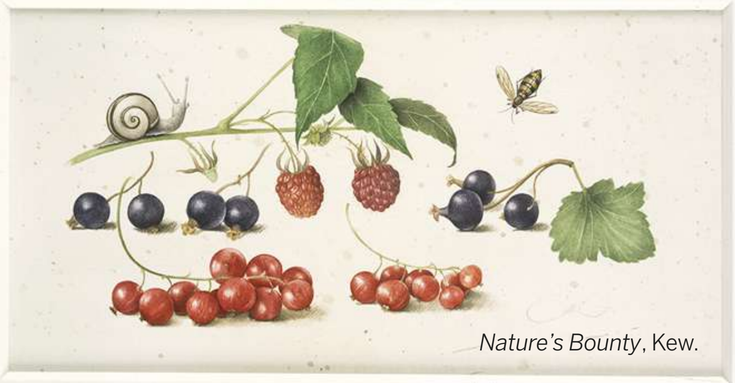
GROW YOUR OWN

Salad days

Thompson & Morgan's new salad turnip 'Salad Delight' has been bred specifically for its small root size and sweet taste. It can be grown outdoors in summer, and in a greenhouse or even on a windowsill during the winter months. And it's not just the roots that make a tasty addition to salads; the leaves are hairless and can be cut when young for adding to salads and stir-fries. **Tel 0844 573 1818, thompson-morgan.com**

Diary

Autumnal days still have much to offer the garden enthusiast



Nature's Bounty, Kew.

• **International Garden Photographer of the Year** Competition open to professional and amateur photographers with several categories all focused around gardens and nature. Deadline for entries is 31 October. Details at igpoty.com

• **Nature's Bounty** Exhibition of historic and contemporary botanical art of fruit and plants from the Shirley Sherwood collection. Until 31 January, 10am-5.30pm. Shirley Sherwood Gallery, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB. Tel 020 8332 5655, kew.org

• **RHS London Frost Fair** Celebrate the season with nurseries selling the best winter plants, gardening advice and talks. 1 November, 10am-4pm. £5 in advance, £8 on the day. RHS Horticultural Hall, London SW1P 2QW. Tel 0844 338 7502, rhs.org.uk

• **Winter Light at Waddesdon** Light installation artist Bruce Munro returns to Waddesdon for his third and final year, creating a multi-sensory journey through the gardens, along an immersive light art trail. 11 November – 3 January, 4-6pm, late-night opening until 8pm on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. £8. (Entry to the manor and its Christmas display requires a separate ticket). Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0JH. Tel 01296 653226, waddesdon.org.uk

• **Growing apples, pears, plums and cherries** Day course on growing your own fruit – from selecting the right cultivars to general care and management, including pests, disease and pruning. 7 November, 9am-5pm. £110. West Dean College, nr Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ. Tel 01243 818300, westdean.org.uk

• **Photography workshop** Enjoy the grounds of Painshill Park, while learning how to take detailed photographs of the colour-filled autumn landscape. 7 November, 9.30am-3.30pm. £45. Painshill, Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1JE. Tel 01932 868113, painshill.co.uk

• **WFGA soft fruit pruning and propagation workshop** Run by the Women's Farm & Garden Association – but open to all. One-day course covering all aspects of soft fruit pruning and propagation including taking cuttings and guidance on where to plant them. 14 November, 10am-4pm. £50. Private garden, nr Woodbridge, Suffolk. Tel 01285 658339, wfga.org.uk

THOMPSON & MORGAN; RED AND BLACK CURRANTS, RASPBERRIES, SNAIL AND BEE 2001 (WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER) BY GERTRUDE HAMILTON

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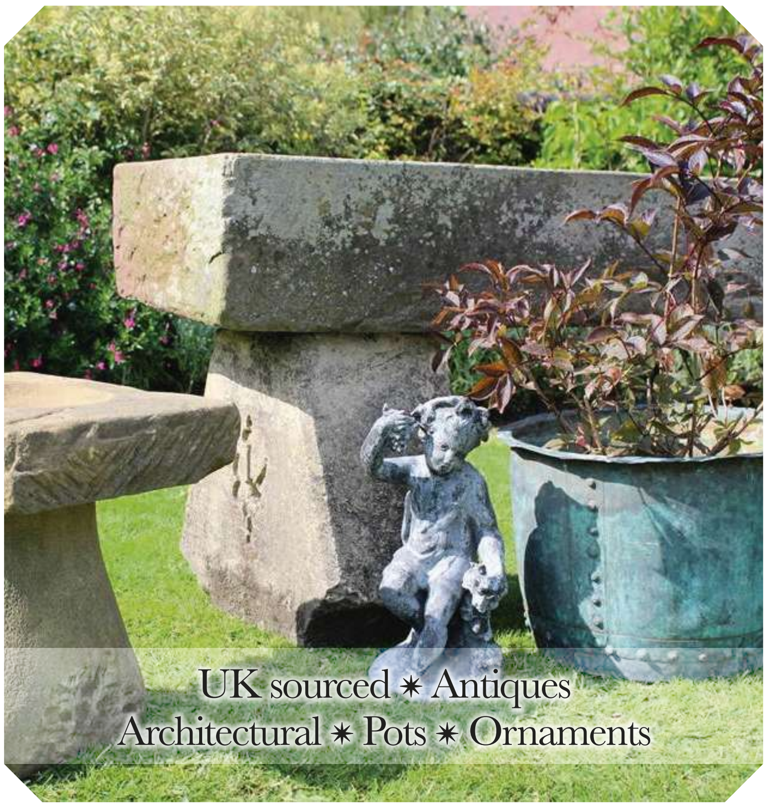

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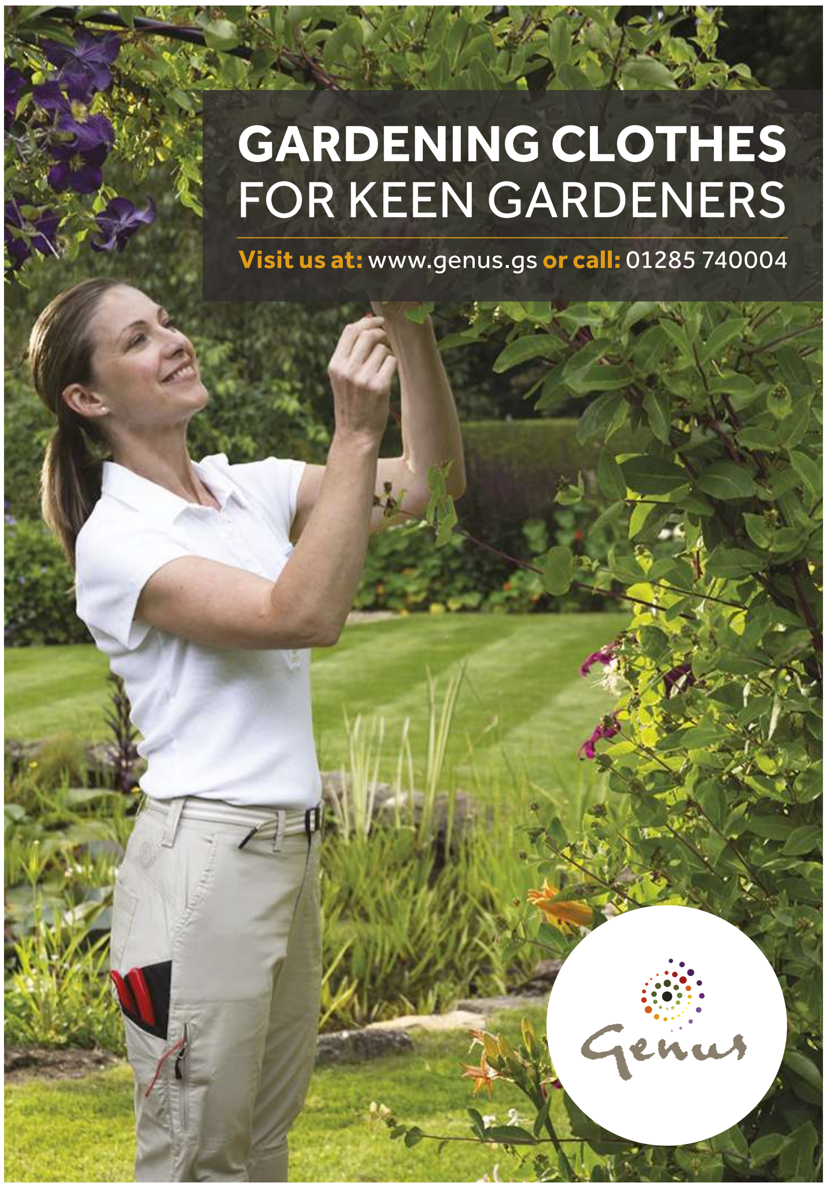

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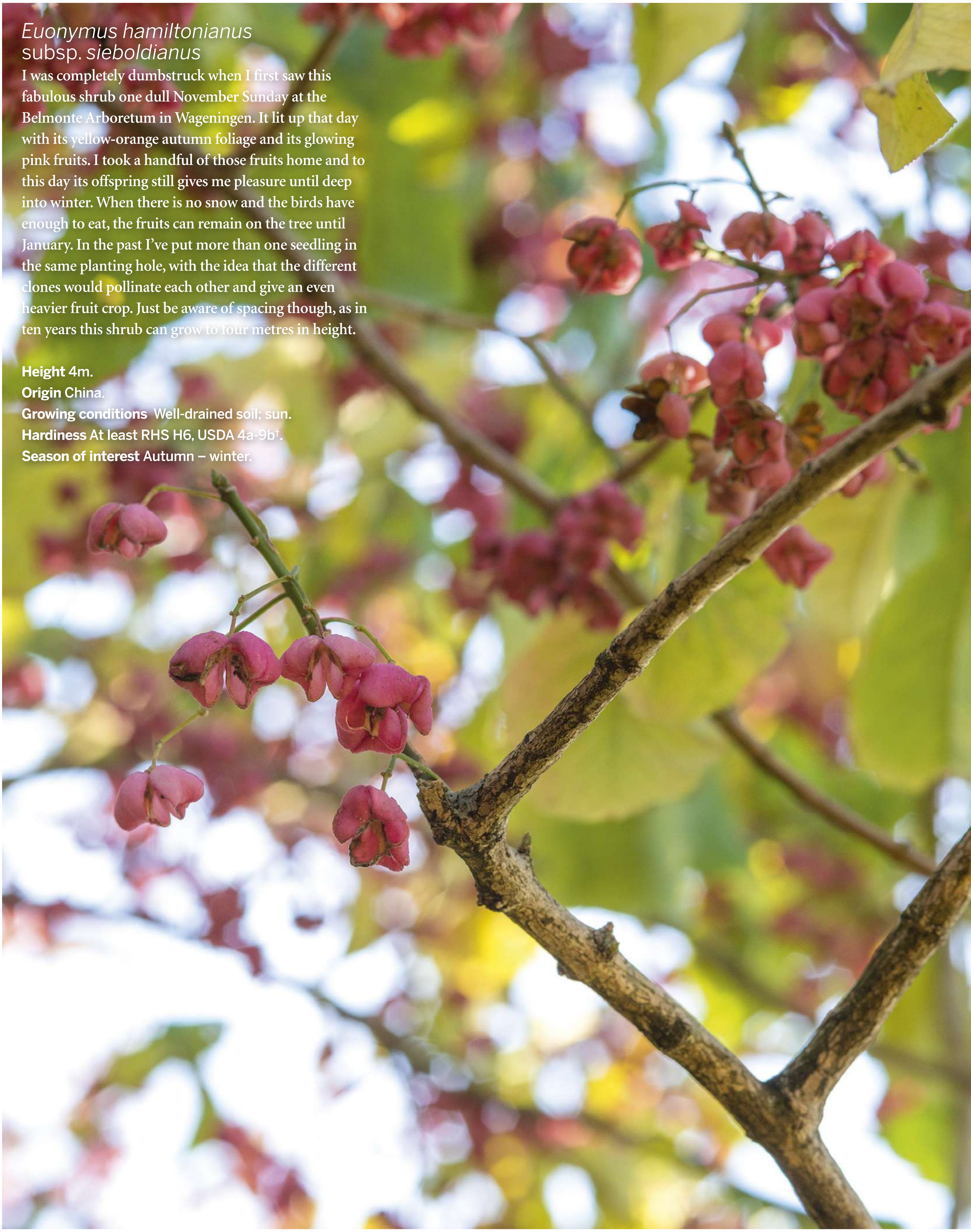
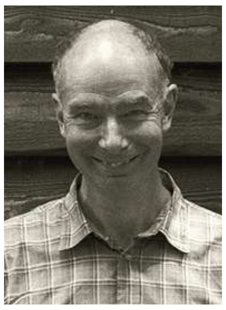


Euonymus hamiltonianus subsp. *sieboldianus*

I was completely dumbstruck when I first saw this fabulous shrub one dull November Sunday at the Belmonte Arboretum in Wageningen. It lit up that day with its yellow-orange autumn foliage and its glowing pink fruits. I took a handful of those fruits home and to this day its offspring still gives me pleasure until deep into winter. When there is no snow and the birds have enough to eat, the fruits can remain on the tree until January. In the past I've put more than one seedling in the same planting hole, with the idea that the different clones would pollinate each other and give an even heavier fruit crop. Just be aware of spacing though, as in ten years this shrub can grow to four metres in height.

Height 4m.
Origin China.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.
Hardiness At least RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b[†].
Season of interest Autumn – winter.



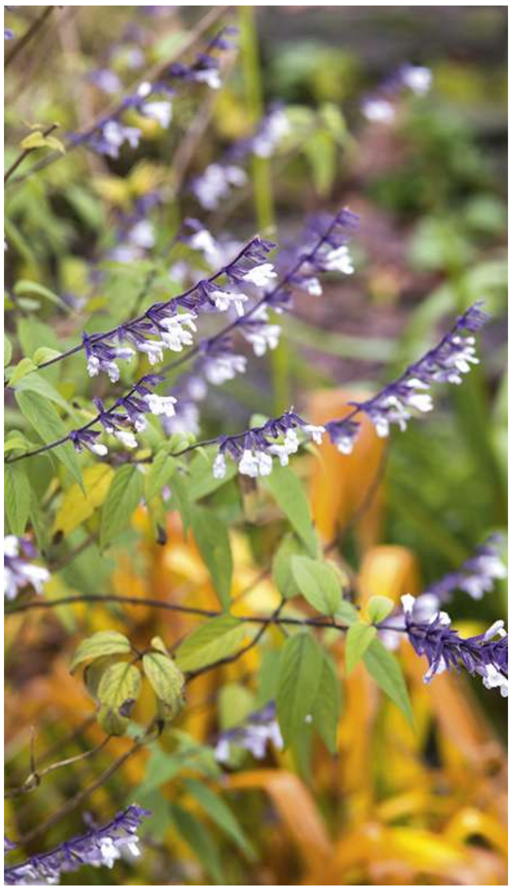
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

November plants

In what can sometimes be a dull month, Hans reveals some surprisingly long-flowering plants and plenty of unexpected bright colours

WORDS HANS KRAMER PHOTOGRAPHS MAAYKE DE RIDDER

Hans Kramer co-owns Kwekerij De Hessenhof in the Netherlands. hessenhof.nl



Salvia 'Phyllis' Fancy'

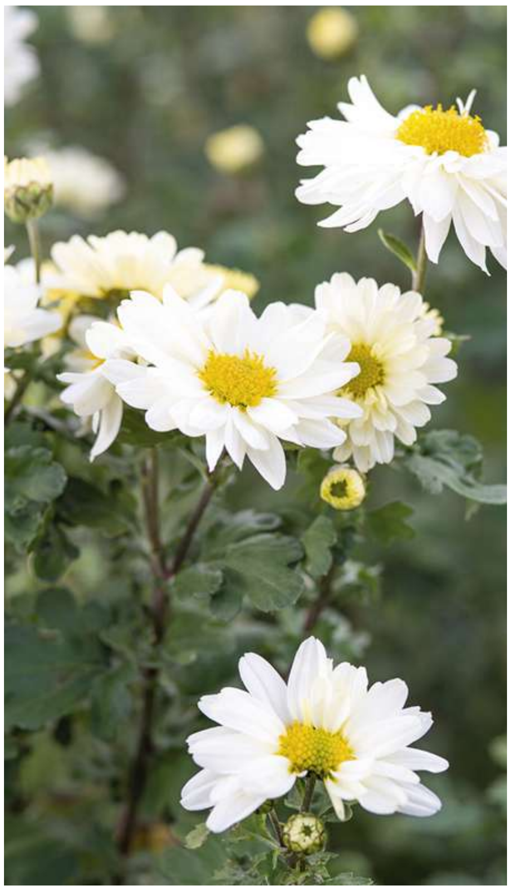
Although many salvias come into flower earlier than 'Phyllis Fancy', none have a nicer colour in late autumn. The colour seems to deepen as temperatures fall. The lavender-blue flowers, which have a whitish lip, are set off by inky-blue bracts. If you plant your overwintered pot in the open ground in spring, you will have a gorgeous clump come autumn laden with flowers. This can mean that its difficult to find a shoot without flowers for taking autumn cuttings, but with some luck the original plant will survive if the winter is not too cold.

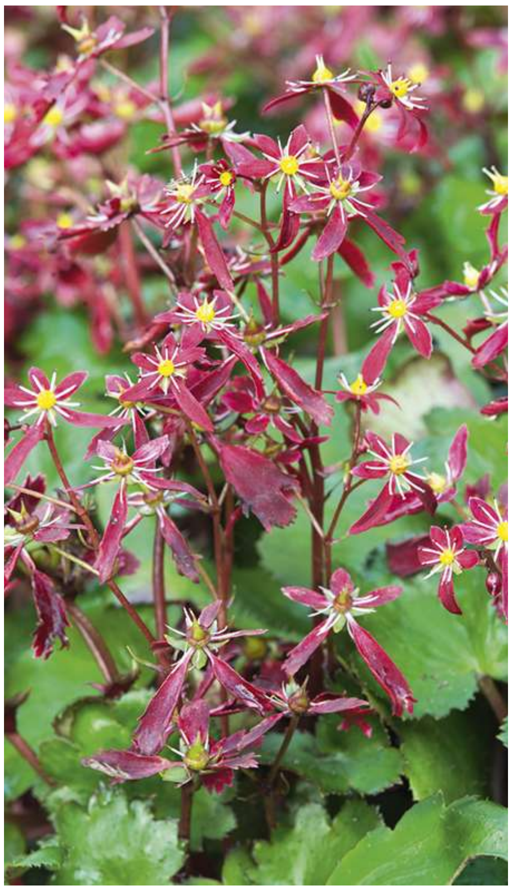
Height 1.2m.
Origin Mexico.
Growing conditions Best grown in a pot in a warm, sunny spot. Overwinter indoors.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 9b-11.
Season of interest Autumn.

Chrysanthemum 'Poesie'

For years this cultivar grew, unnamed, in a Romanian village in the Carpathian Mountains (there's probably no better proof of winter hardiness than that) until it was introduced into cultivation and named by German nurseryman Wolfgang Kautz. In 2004 it received an ISU award from the International Hardy Plant Union, so it is possibly the most robust autumn chrysanthemum. A profusion of creamy-white flowers cover the plant right through November. These fade to a mauvish pink flush. Lasts for weeks as a cut flower.

Height 1m.
Origin China, Korea.
Growing conditions All soils with good drainage; sun.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Autumn.

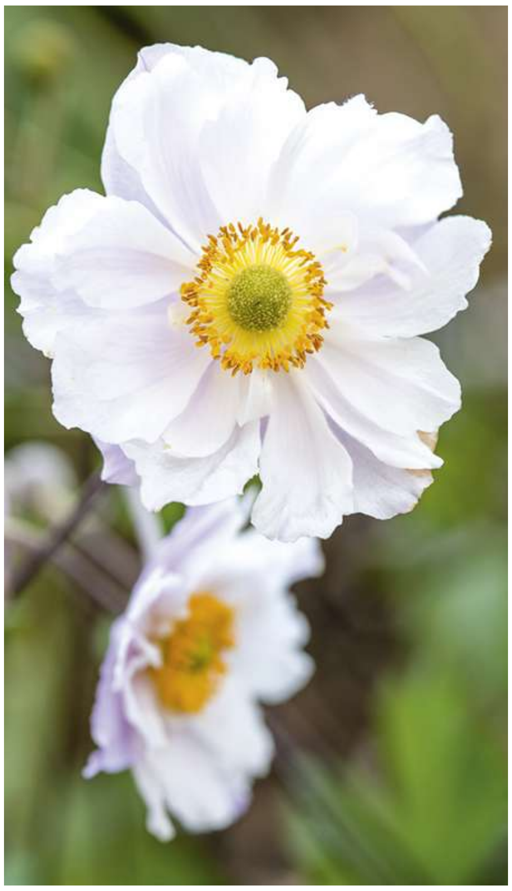




Saxifraga fortunei 'Beni Tsukasa'

At last year's Great Dixter Plant Fair I overheard someone refer to saxifrages as 'vine weevil food'. They may have a point, but the grubs don't like them as much as heucheras, which may be more popular, but don't have such unbelievably big red flowers. The brightly coloured flowers appear in late autumn, when you don't expect such colour. Plant this little gem in a shady, moist spot, with overhanging branches to protect the flowers from an early night frost, or overwinter it in a pot.

Height 25cm.
Origin China, Japan.
Growing conditions Acidic moist soil, part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Autumn.



Anemone 'Dreaming Swan'

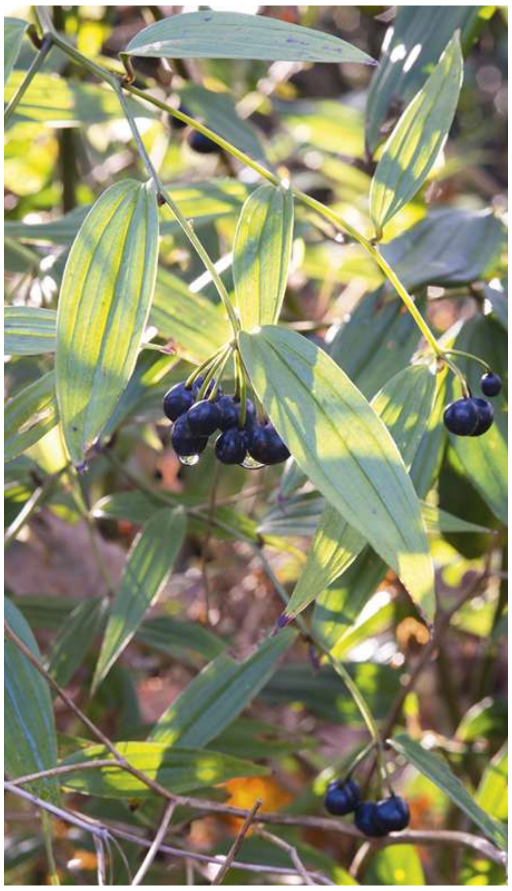
Elizabeth MacGregor's Swan series of anemones are among the most innovative plants of the past few years. They're elegant, long flowering and reliable, and this captivating cultivar, with bluish tones shown through the white, is particularly charming. The large, semi-double bowls of white flowers and lilac blue backs are inherited from *Anemone rivularis*. The first flowers, which may be single, appear at the end of June and last until mid November, giving it an unbelievable flowering period of more than four months.

Height 50cm.
Origin China, Japan.
Growing conditions Humus-rich soil, not too dry; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Summer – autumn.

Parrotia persica

Although it gets its autumn colour later than other trees, once the leaves turn, this small tree, or shrub, offers some of the best autumn colour. It starts out a brilliant yellow and orange ending, often in December, a fiery scarlet. After that it is only a few months before this member of the *Hamamelidaceae* family comes into flower. Although not very conspicuous, the crimson-maroon flowers – or to be correct, stamens – are curious to see. I like its glorious, wide-spreading horizontal growth especially noticeable in older specimens.

Height 8m.
Origin Iran.
Growing conditions Tolerates alkaline soils; full sun or part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Autumn – winter.



Disporum longistylum 'Night Heron'

Although it can take several years, this luxurious *Disporum* will eventually bear prolific tassels of blue-black berries. In mild winters the plant remains evergreen and the berries can remain until spring, in which case you'll need to cut it back in March or you won't be able to enjoy the ascending asparagus-like shoots, which have attractive whitish papery bracts. It can take up to five years to reach maturity, but when it does it is one of the most impressive shade plants.

Height 1.5m.
Origin China.
Growing conditions Humus-rich soil, not too dry; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5b-9b.
Season of interest Spring, and again in autumn.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

The Italian gardens at **Trentham**, revived by renowned garden designer Tom Stuart-Smith, are full of herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses that last all autumn and into early winter. Beds edged with box and dramatic topiary adds drama to the garden when colour begins to fade and the swathes of grass bring texture and provide a rustic, playful beauty to the formality of the parterre. The Trentham Estate, Stone Road, Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8AX. Tel 01782 646646, trentham.co.uk

Trentham.

CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS

More topiary is on display at **Felley Priory** in Nottinghamshire. Here you can take time out to admire the stunning array of box and yew shaped into swans, castles and peacocks that form the original framework

Hesperantha coccinea 'Elburton Glow'

This valuable autumn-flowering plant is said to thrive only in fertile, moist soils, and I've seen many impressive clumps full of flowers at pond sides. But it will also tolerate drier soils and on these can be completely hardy. Here on my nursery, with humus-rich, sandy soil, I've never lost one, even in the coldest of winters. In fact they grow like weeds, forming a wide mat in no time at all. From September onwards the first flowers open to an unmistakable salmon-red colour.

Height 60cm.
Origin South Africa.
Growing conditions Moist and reasonably dry soils.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest Summer – autumn.

Panicum amarum 'Dewey Blue'

This beautiful grass grows quite slowly, which may be why you rarely see it, but if you plant it your patience will be rewarded by one of the showiest blue-leaved panicums I know of. It was selected by the American grass expert Rick Darke, and its leaves, which have an elegant, arching habit, are broader than most other panicums and very glaucous. From early autumn onwards the flowering spikes appear and these make a graceful, fountain-like habit. Avoid fertile, moist soils, otherwise it is likely to flop over.

Height 1.2m.
Origin North America.
Growing conditions Dry soil, sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 2a-9b.
Season of interest Summer – autumn.

Corydalis flexuosa 'Purple Leaf'

This cultivar with purple-flushed leaves is one of three corydalis introduced from China in the late 1980s. It's a good nurseryman's plant, because it divides so easily. Normally, it flowers in April and May and takes a rest in summer. Then in autumn, if the weather is mild, it will suddenly reappear and you see a glimpse of fresh, crispy leaves and clean, light-blue flowers. A welcome surprise at this time of the year.

Height 30cm.
Origin China.
Growing conditions Humus-rich soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Spring, and again in autumn.

of the gardens. In contrast to all the green you can also enjoy the mauve and white colchicums that offer a dainty dash of colour. Felley Priory, Underwood, Nottinghamshire NG16 5FJ. Tel 01773 810230, felleypriory.co.uk

Fourteen, 300-year-old yew trees and a 14m-high hedge are an iconic sight at **Powis Castle** and this month they provide an impressive backdrop to the red and gold maples that consume the hanging terraces in a blaze of late autumn colour. Powis Castle, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 8RF. Tel 01938 551944, nationaltrust.org.uk/powis-castle

Early last year the **Hillier Winter Garden** was extended to cover four acres, making it one of the largest winter gardens in Europe. November is a great time to see the willow, cornus and birch that are just a few of the new plants chosen for their coloured stems, scent and foliage. Another seasonal highlight is the Acer Valley and Pinetum; a perfect place to appreciate late-autumn colour. Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Jermyns Lane, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 0QA. Tel 01794 369317/318, hants.gov.uk/hilliergardens

Powis Castle.

JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS

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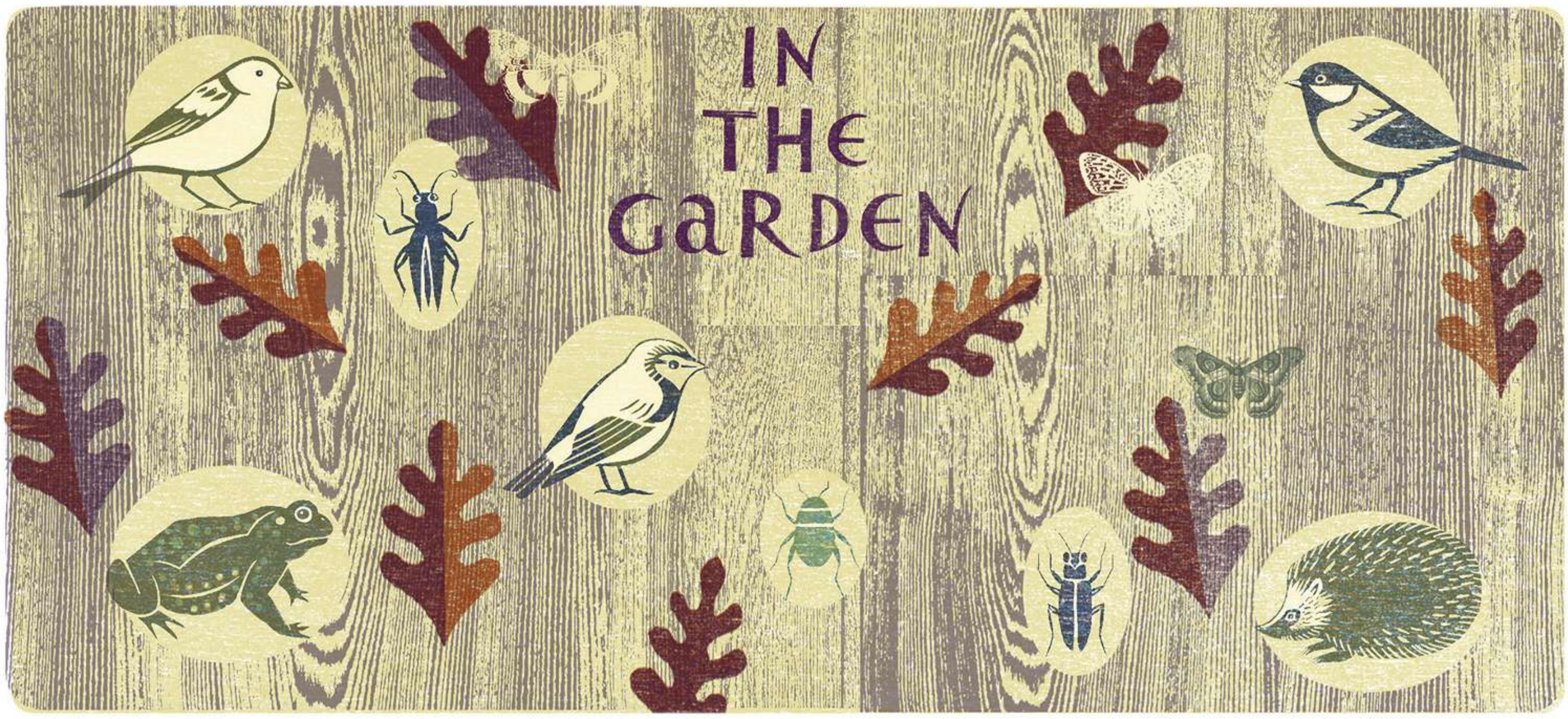

As winter looms, Jojo tidies up her plot and spends time thinking about its other inhabitants

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** ILLUSTRATIONS **SARAH YOUNG**

I like gardening on the edge of winter. The jobs that need doing are neither too vigorous nor too numerous; instead they are of the pleasing putting-to-rights kind. Things are slowing down, weeds no longer grow like Topsy and the time-consuming job of watering large sections of the plot by hand no longer needs to be done. Instead there are tools to be cleaned and rubbed with an oily cloth, leaves to be raked and the odd bit of soft fruit pruning to do. I would like to be the kind of person who keeps their shed in perfect order but it is often the case that after I have weeded, watered and picked in too short a space of time that there is only a moment in which to hurl pell-mell rake, spade, mattock, fork and watering cans back into the shed. So it is that I spend a quiet morning watching starlings wheel in the sky over Leyton, creating order where there was only chaos. Chaos will descend again as inevitably as the beginning of spring but setting things straight feels good for now.

Your vegetable garden is a source of food for you but the edges can also provide rich pickings for wildlife. The more complex and diverse your ecosystem the fewer problems you will have with pests attacking your crops. Luring insectivorous birds to your plot is a highly beneficial act and you're off to a good start with a compost heap, which will hold scores of invertebrates such as woodlice, worms, snails, slugs and earwigs. This year I left some chicory to go to seed and the snails tended to congregate there rather than attack my tender seedlings. Leave some wilder, weedy patches too; the odd untidy corner will encourage butterflies, moths, birds and insects; a small patch of nettles, chopped down regularly, will provide soft young plants for many common caterpillars to feed on; bramble, dock and thistle are all rich sources of food. If you're really lucky you may even attract a hedgehog or my dream allotment companion, the toad.

Encourage pollinators by making space for highly scented, nectar-producing plants. Train a honeysuckle over your shed or next year grow sweet rocket, lavender or honesty. Now is the time to clean bird boxes, as the inhabitants will have moved on to winter roosts by now and in doing this you can remove any lurking parasites. Trees provide a home to a multitude of creatures – consider planting a native tree or a bit of hedgerow, such as hazel, beech, rowan or hawthorn or, if you have space (and time), that most mighty of insect hotels, the oak. I let my sunflowers stand until frost and winds knock them down, as the heads heavy with seed offer food and the hollow stalks stacked up beneath my rosemary bush make a haven for insects.

WHAT TO DO NOW

- As well as food and nesting sites, birds are also attracted to water. There's still time to make a pond, especially a miniature one like mine. I found a five-litre plastic paint pot in the rubbish piled up at our site's gate and sunk it in the ground, leaving a branch for wildlife to climb out on. An upturned dustbin lid makes a good birdbath too. Having provided for others, protect your own by netting cabbages against pigeons and pulling a mini fleece tunnel over oriental salads, spinach and chicory.
- Harvesting vegetables on squally wintery days is not a pleasurable task so make life simple by arranging your winter plot so you can see what is available. If you suffer hard frosts, consider digging some of your leeks in advance; it's impossible to pull them when it's icy but replanting them horizontally just under the soil will make them easy to get at. Mark your line of parsnips with a stick as it's hard to find them when the foliage withers or the ground is covered in snow.
- Think ahead and procure some manure from a farm or stables to rot down over winter. Onions don't like disturbed ground so set aside a space for an onion bed and dig it over so it has time to settle before spring.

IN THE
KITCHEN

Agrodolce is a lovely word. Like a bare-knuckle fighter with a heart of gold, it's a culinary term that means sour and sweet and usually refers to a mixture of sugar and vinegar used either to dress or cook with. In this recipe it's used to transform small pickling onions or shallots into cipolline in *agrodolce*, the onions cooked but still firm and coated in sweet-and-sour syrup. Take 500g unpeeled weight of small onions, top and tail and peel carefully. Heat two tablespoons of olive oil in a deep-sided pan, add a bay leaf and a couple of cloves and then gently brown the onions, taking care not to use too violent a heat. When you're happy with the colour, add two tablespoons of balsamic vinegar and two of white wine vinegar plus one tablespoon of sugar. Cover and cook until tender, keeping a careful eye to see if they are catching (if so add a little water). Allow to cool, cover, refrigerate and eat the next day (they will crisp up a little in the fridge). Eat as an appetiser or with roasted meats.

I'm always looking for new ways to cook chicory: the first here is sour sweet, the second subtly savoury. Pickled radicchio is quick to make as, unlike most pickles, it is ready in hours not weeks. Discard any tired leaves and then separate the rest, tearing the larger ones in half. Make a simple brine by heating 400ml of white wine vinegar, two tablespoons of sea salt and eight tablespoons of sugar. Allow the brine to cool, pour into a bowl and then immerse the leaves (weigh them down with a saucer). Leave to soften for at least two hours, moving them around from time to time. Drain to serve and eat as part of a winter salad with beets or cheese or smoked fish. For colder days the heads can be griddled and served with an anchovy dressing.

> Pickled radicchio is quick to make as, unlike most pickles, it is ready in hours not weeks

The dressing needs to sit and develop so make it first. Crush a decent-sized clove of garlic in a pestle with a pinch of sea salt, remove the paste and reserve with a teaspoon of olive oil. Then, using the same pestle, pound (or chop) six salt-packed anchovy fillets (or a tin of 12 smaller oil-packed fillets) combine with two tablespoons of red wine vinegar and four tablespoons of olive oil, whisk well and leave for an hour. About 15 minutes before you want to eat, remove the outer leaves from the chicory heads and split lengthways. Season the halves on the cut side with sea salt and black pepper and rub in olive oil. Heat a griddle pan or heavy frying pan until smoking hot and cook the halves over a medium heat for five minutes until hot through, then turn over and grill the other side for three minutes or until tender (test with the point of a knife). Arrange on a plate and dress with the anchoiade.

RECIPES

Apple and tamarind chutney

Make home-made pickle now and it will be ready to eat in a month's time (for Christmas). The sweet apple benefits from the tang of the tamarind, the sour pulp extracted from the bean of the tamarind tree. Take **1tbsp of dried pickling spices** (a mix of mustard seeds, dried chillies, cloves, peppercorns, allspice, cinnamon, coriander), **450g onions**, finely chopped, **300ml white vinegar**, **900g cooking apples** (weight when peeled and cored), **5cm lump dried tamarind**, **350g soft light brown sugar**, **1 walnut-sized piece of ginger**, peeled and finely grated, **6 fresh red chillies**, deseeded and thinly sliced, **1tsp mustard seeds**, **100g raisins**, **sea salt and pepper**. Makes approx five medium (**350ml**) jars. Put the pickling spices in a small square of fabric and tie up. Soak the tamarind in a cup of boiling water. Gently simmer the onions with half the vinegar in a large stainless steel saucepan for 10 minutes. Peel, core and chop the apples into 2cm cubes and add to the pan with the rest of the vinegar, the spices, raisins, sugar, ginger, chillies, mustard seeds, a little sea salt and pepper. Stir until the sugar is dissolved. Rub the softened tamarind through a sieve with a wooden spoon straight into the pan. Stir well. Cook for about 45 minutes at a gentle simmer, stirring occasionally to get a thick jam-like texture. Remove from the heat and spoon into hot sterilised jars. Cover with waxed paper discs, seal and store in a dark cupboard for at least a month.

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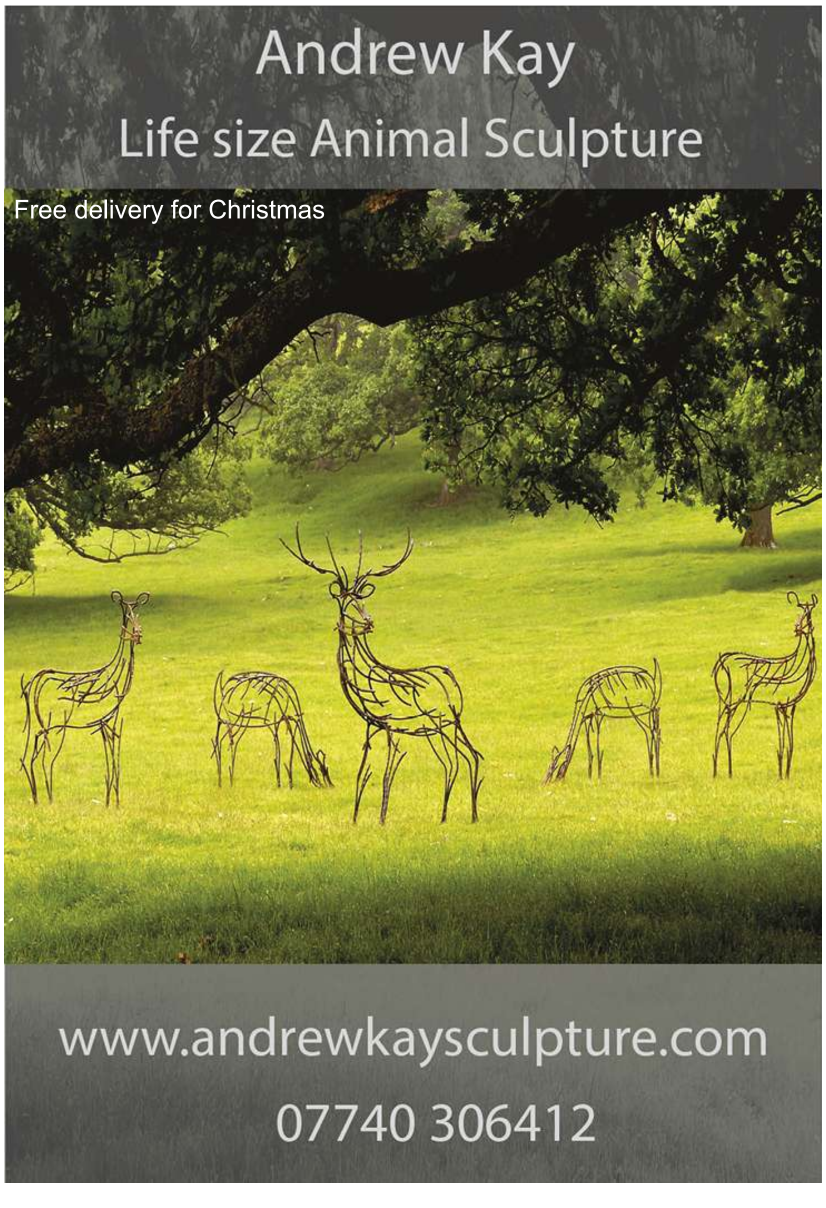

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PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory Playing in the carrot field on our farm.

Have you always been a gardener? I studied social anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. It seemed like a big leap to become a farmer but actually farming is all about people and communities, especially on smaller-scale, mixed farms.

Who are your horticultural heroes The people who pick our food by hand. In lots of places this is one crop all day for very little pay. It's very hard work and is often undervalued.

Favourite landscape I spent a lot of time playing on the farm where I grew up so I had a strong relationship with the place. This is probably why I wanted my career to involve building a relationship with a piece of land and helping others to have access to nature on farms.

Three most worthwhile tips Recycle organic waste for compost to improve your soil; sow for the next season, and be open to continually learning by observing your surroundings.

Most valuable training I did a two-year apprenticeship through the Soil Association on a mixed veg, 33-acre, organic farm. The hard work in the field really tested whether I was cut out for farming, while the horticultural tutorials backed up my practical knowledge.

With whom would you most like to have tea in the garden? Michael Morpurgo as I'm interested in giving more children access to nature. Michael has encouraged this through his books, which engage children's imagination and through his charity Farms for City Children.

Favourite planting style I like to play around with interplanting different vegetables. It is a good way of maximising cropping space and it prevents beds from becoming mono crops.

Unsung hero of the plant world Chard: it is so delicious to eat, has a long season and is very easy to grow and yet it is usually only available at farmers' markets or through box schemes.

If you had to leave your garden in a hurry, what plant would you take with you? I would grab a handful of seeding mixed salad. It is abundant and grows easily from saved seed, which means I could easily start a new vegetable patch.

Contact alice.holden@growingcommunities.org.

Get Alice's tips on growing veg in her book *Do Grow: Start with 10 Simple Vegetables* (thedobook.co, £8.99).

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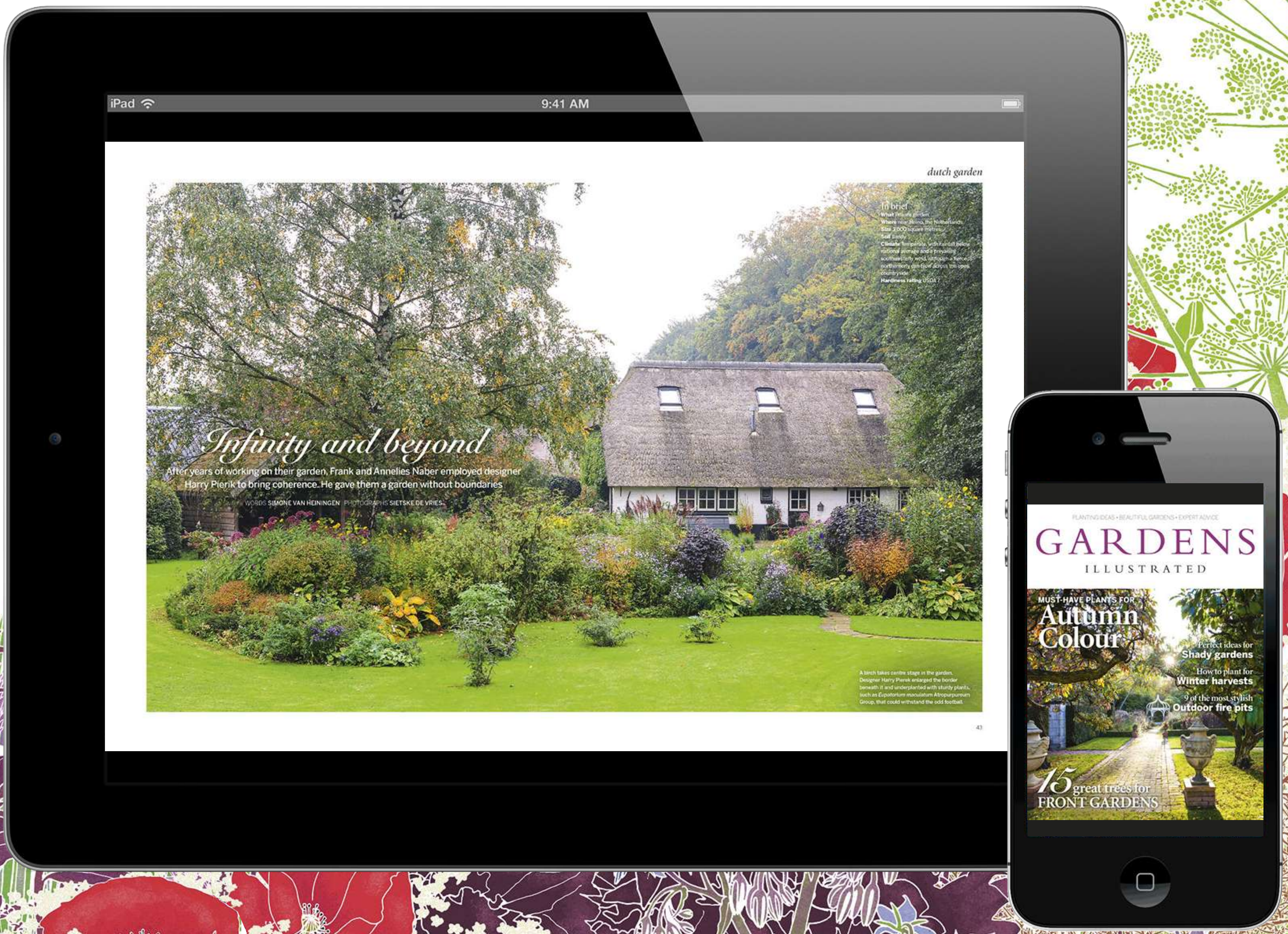
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Infinity and beyond
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In brief

Name Ohinetahi, meaning the 'place of one daughter'. Legend has it that a Maori chief of the area, who lived 300 years ago had many sons but only one daughter.
What Formal domestic garden featuring separate garden rooms around a stone house.
Where Governors Bay, near Christchurch, New Zealand.
Size Three acres.
Soil Rich volcanic soil.
Climate Cool temperate with frosts and occasional snow in winter.
Hardiness rating USDA 9b.

Shaken not stirred

Following a devastating earthquake in 2010, architect Sir Miles Warren was forced to restore all of the walls, towers and follies contained in his New Zealand garden – offering the opportunity to add to his masterpiece

WORDS **CHRISTINE REID** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**

A broad brick path leads to a gazebo, designed by owner Sir Miles Warren. In late autumn the planting is soft and misty with red dahlias and *Verbena bonariensis* dancing above silvery artemisia.

You are standing, overlooking the silver gleam of water with a line of low hills on each side, beckoning towards the sea. Behind you, thick belts of trees – coniferous and deciduous – shelter the garden and the land rises up into rocky outcrops beyond the immediate surrounds. You would have no trouble believing you were in a beautiful garden on the west coast of Scotland.

But you would be wrong. You are at the opposite end of the earth on the lush east coast of New Zealand's South Island. The physical resemblance is striking – but there is one major but invisible difference.

This particular garden, Ohinetahi, a 30-minute drive south of Christchurch, lies in a major earthquake zone. In the earthquake of 4 September 2010, architect owner Sir Miles Warren was lucky to walk away uninjured. However, his 19th-century stone house suffered severe damage when ▷

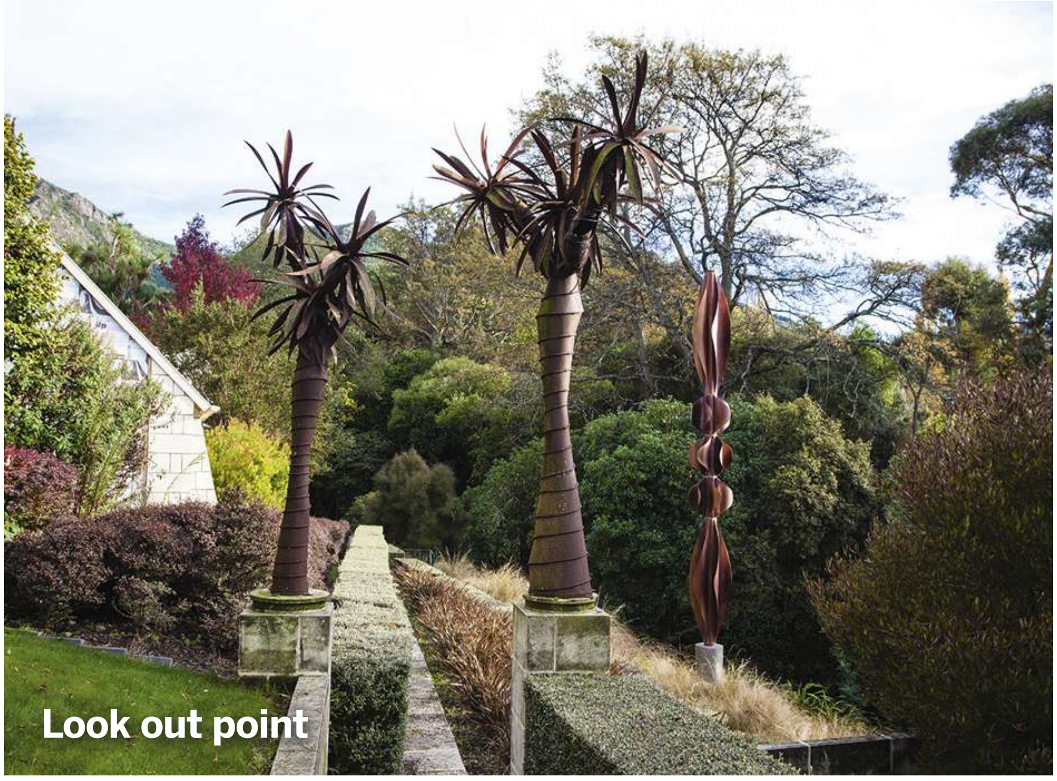
Garden rooms

Look out point
At this high point looking out over a deep valley to the bay, Sir Miles has placed two quirky sculptures of cabbage palms alongside Graham Bennett's sculpture *Connections and Differences*. The hedge of *Corokia* x *virgata* 'Frosted Chocolate' delineates the edge of the formal garden around the house.

Bay laurel pool
Designed by two architects and an artist, the garden inevitably has a strong structural framework. Here the rectangular layout is relieved with the three beautifully clipped bay laurels, while the axis of the central path extends from the rose garden through the lawn via a long reflecting pool edged with box. Eight Coade stone flowers gently break the pool's surface.

The Red Garden
This walled garden near the house, takes its name from the bright vermilion of the poppies that dominate in spring along with other bright plants, including tulips and dahlias, and at this time of year the foliage of the *Amelanchier lamarckii*. "The reds contrast with the green of the buxus; brick steps and paths are also offset by the yew," says Sir Miles.

Topiary-framed steps
A collection of topiary cones, spirals and quirky chickens makes a brilliant border to this short set of steps. The green geometry of the box also creates a delightful contrast to the stone steps with hedges of *Choisya ternata* picking up the green and white theme. Below the steps the discreet entrance driveway runs between hedges to the house.



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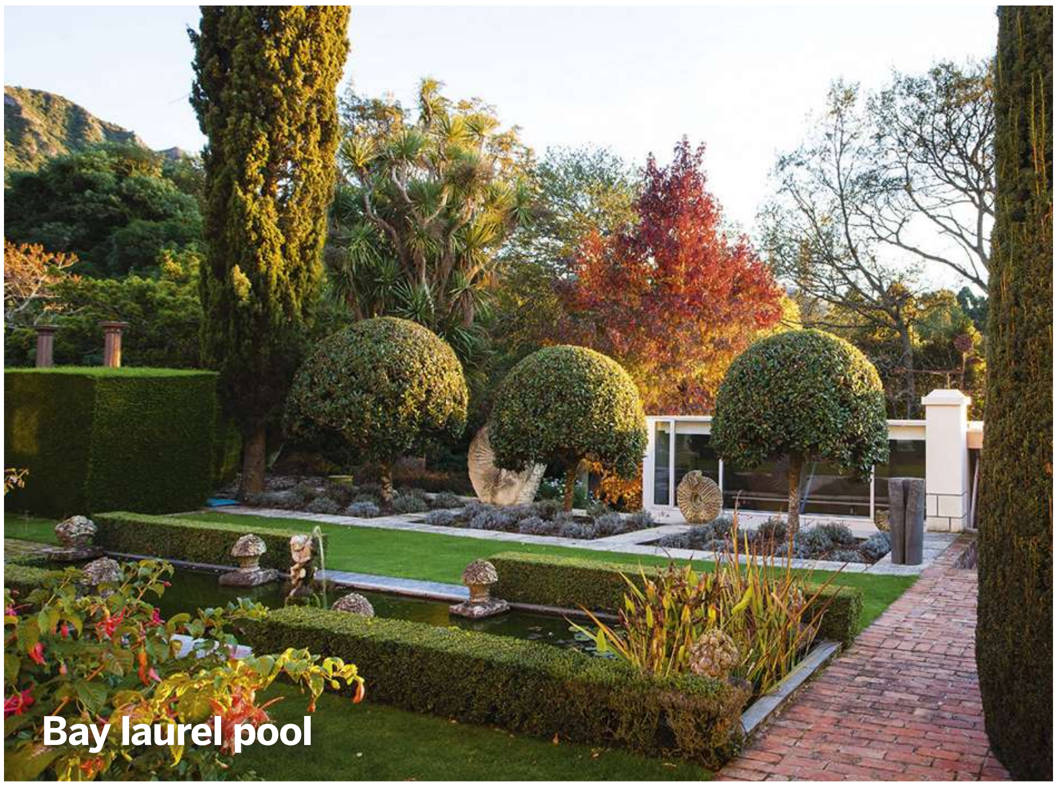
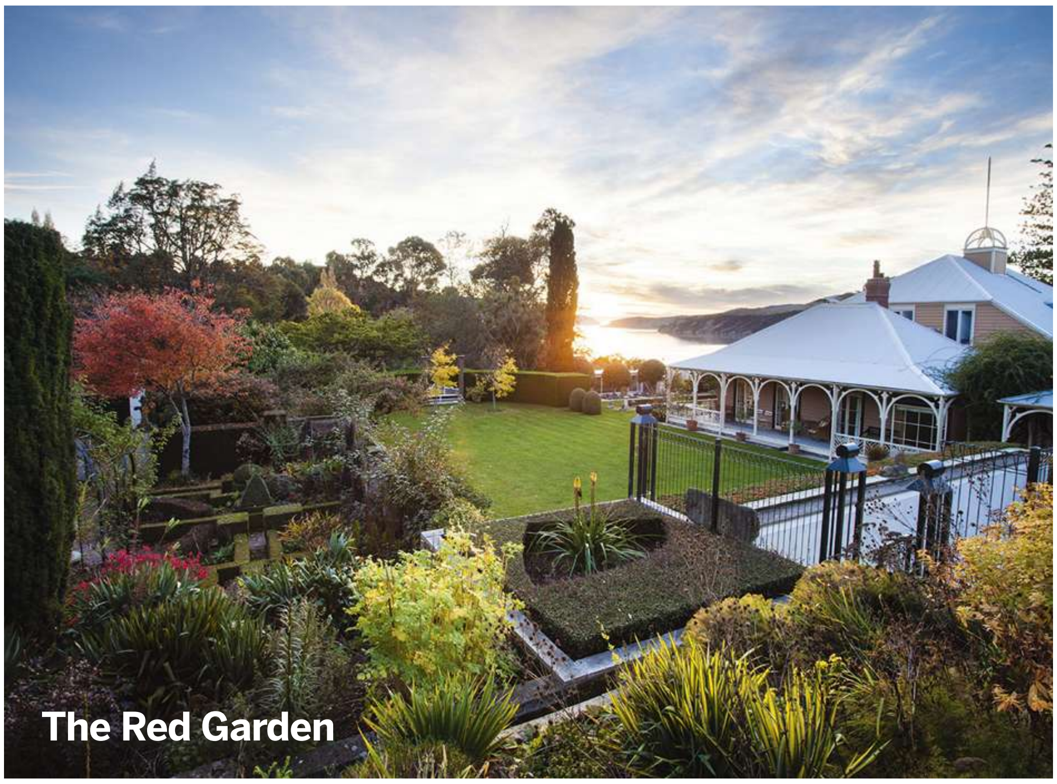
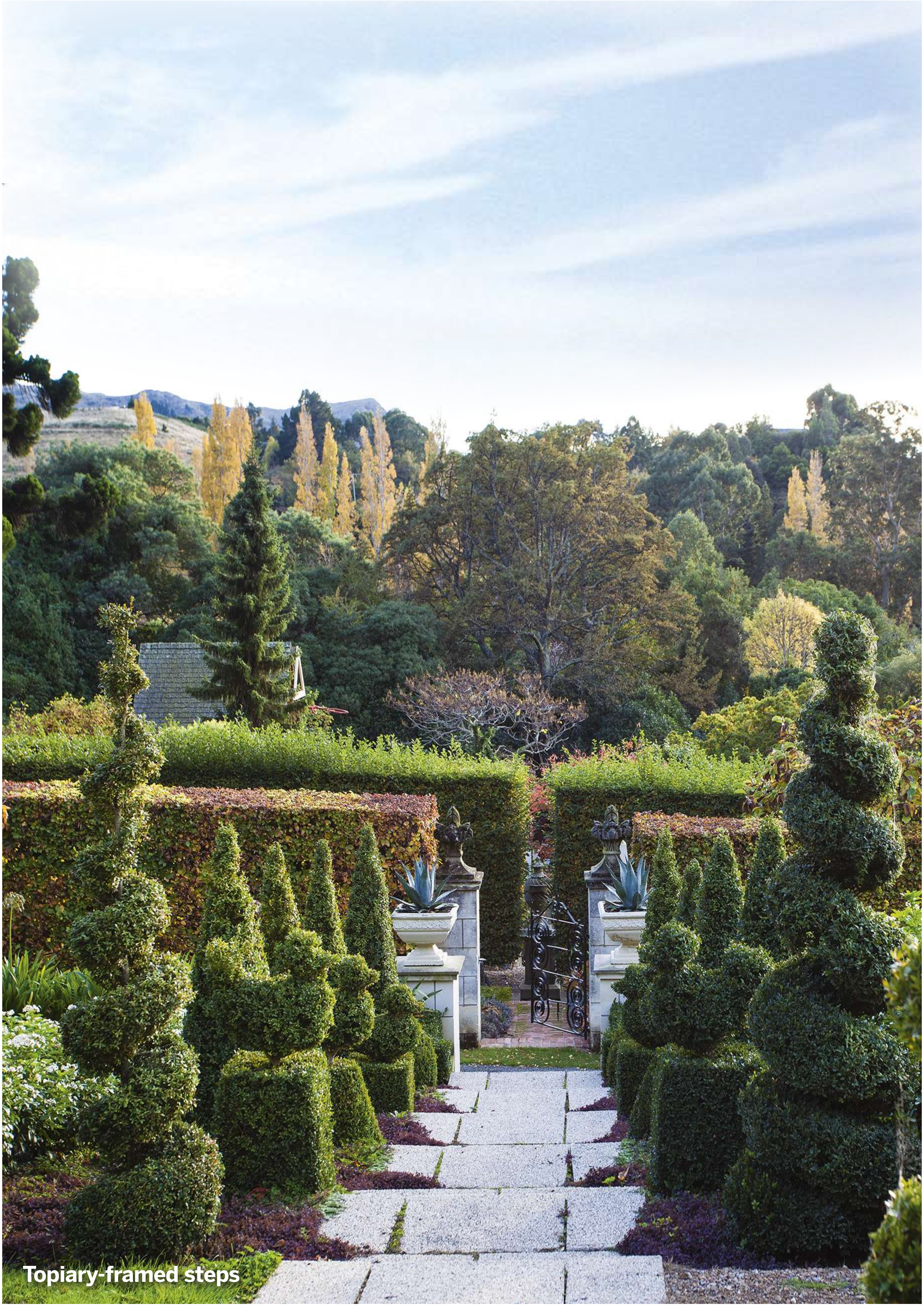


Bay laurel pool



The Red Garden



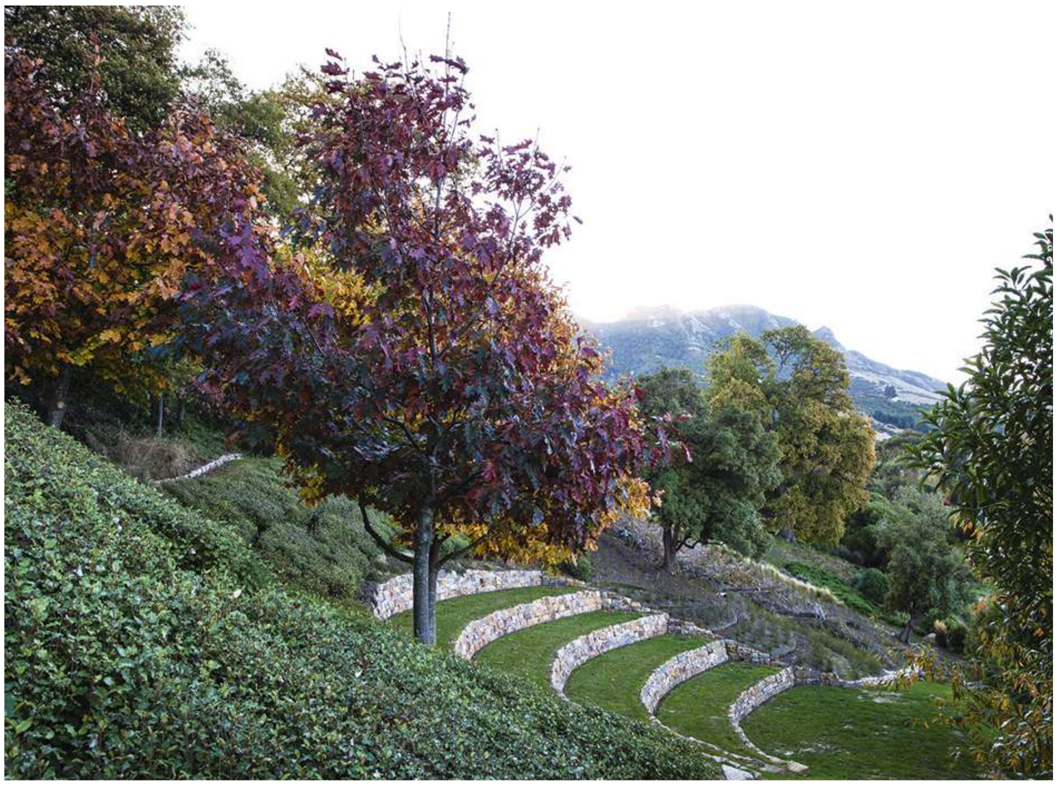
Topiary-framed steps

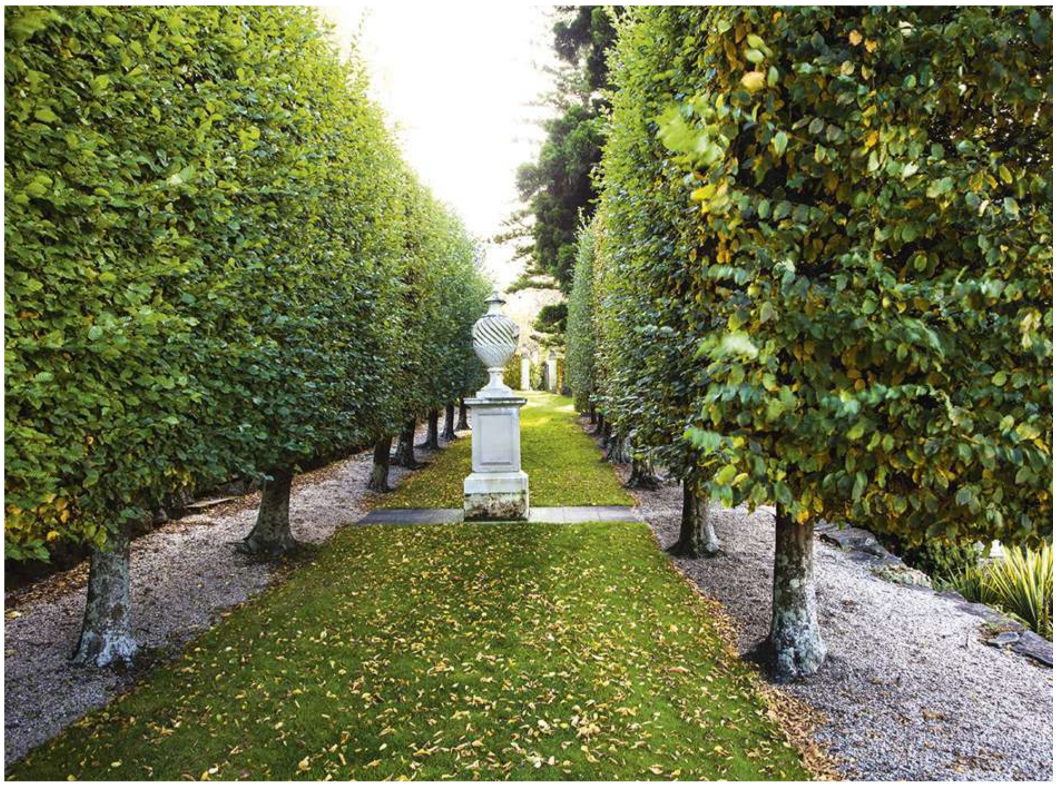
Many visits to English gardens, including Sissinghurst and Hidcote, informed the trio's ideas about garden design

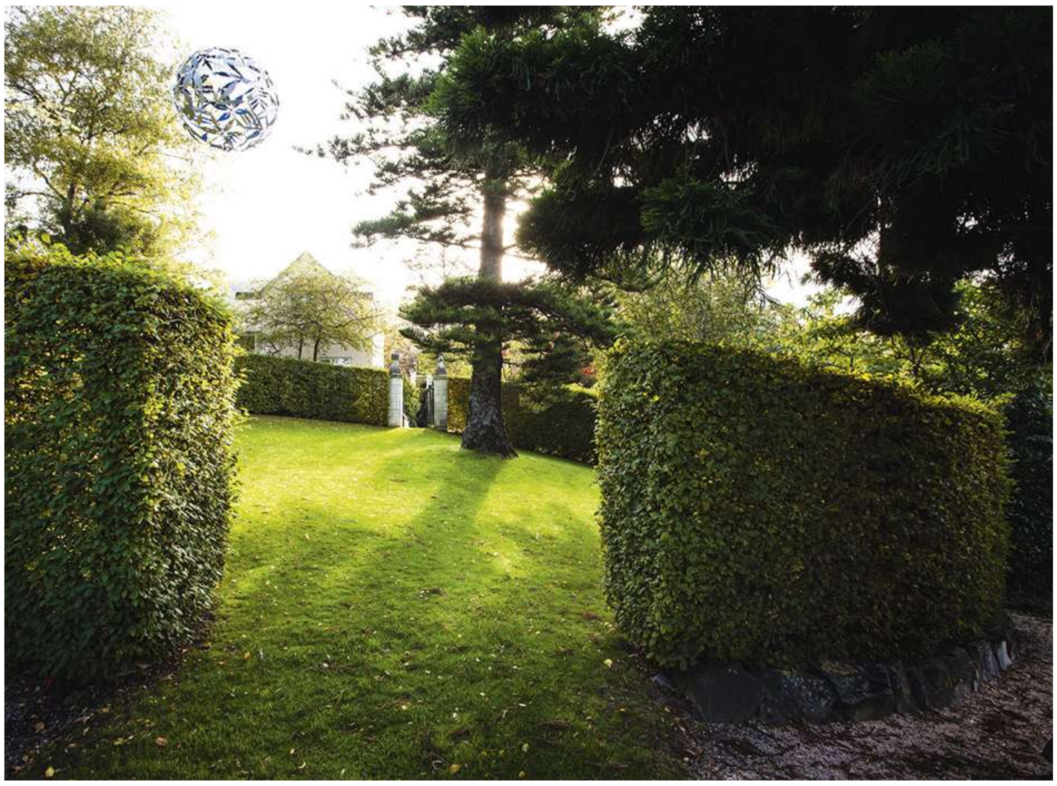
▷ three of the four stone pillars supporting the gables of the upper two storeys collapsed. Work to save the house was well advanced by the time of the second earthquake in February 2011. The garden, amazingly, survived the tremendous shaking – even the treasured trees planted by Ohinetahi's first owner, Thomas Potts, stood tall.

Potts, an amateur botanist, originally from the UK, bought Ohinetahi in 1858. He brought with him seeds and specimen plants he had selected from Kew and set about planting them on the Banks Peninsula where Ohinetahi is located. Skip ahead 100 years to 1977 when Sir Miles, his artist sister Pauline Trengrove and her husband John, also an architect, bought the property. "It was little more than a rundown house, scruffy lawn and a neglected orchard," says Sir Miles. "But what it did have was of immeasurable merit. We had the giant trees and the old house with a harbour view: it was a great start."

Unsurprisingly, with two architects and an artist as owners, the rules of geometry – perspective, dimension, shape and symmetry – came into play early on. Many visits to English gardens, including Sissinghurst and Hidcote, had informed the trio's ideas about garden design. "In the early days, John and I enjoyed the pleasure of designing something as amateurs," says Sir Miles. "We loved ▷







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Corokias, native to New Zealand, cover the hillside bordering the amphitheatre with its views of Governors Bay. Stones from part of the house damaged by the earthquake have been used to landscape the seating.

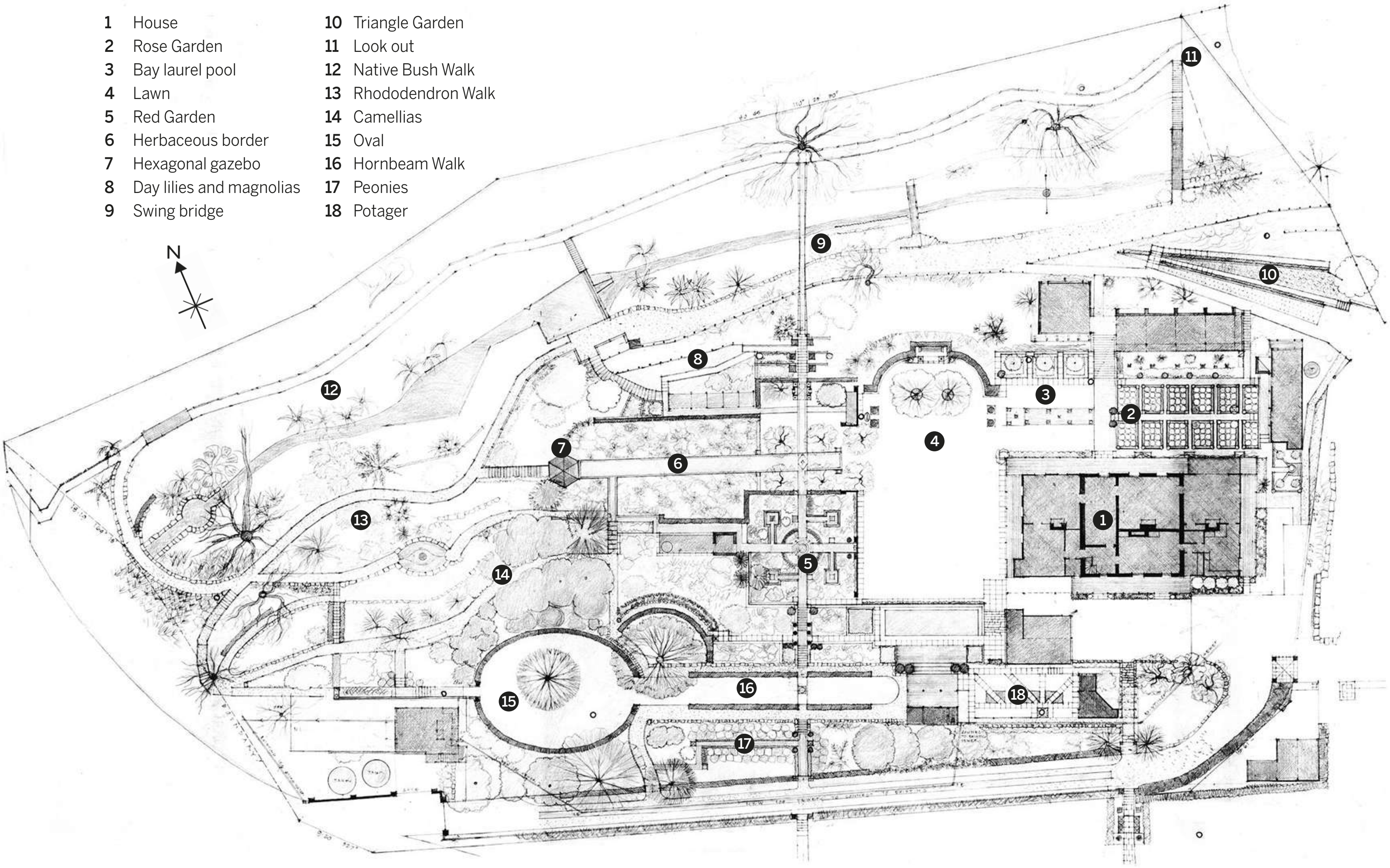
At the centre of the hornbeam walk, modelled on that at Hidcote, is a copy of the famous Alexander Pope urn, designed by William Kent for the poet's garden in Twickenham.

A globe sculpture, by the New Zealand artist Neil Dawson, hangs from one of the highest trees, appearing almost to float above the Oval Lawn. Hornbeam hedges surround the lawn while a tall Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria*

The deep valley and stream to the north of the garden is shaded by five huge oaks with an understorey of numerous native New Zealand plants, including many ferns.

GARDEN PLAN

1 House
2 Rose Garden
3 Bay laurel pool
4 Lawn
5 Red Garden
6 Herbaceous border
7 Hexagonal gazebo
8 Day lilies and magnolias
9 Swing bridge
10 Triangle Garden
11 Look out
12 Native Bush Walk
13 Rhododendron Walk
14 Camellias
15 Oval
16 Hornbeam Walk
17 Peonies
18 Potager



▷ the fact that moving trees or fighting our way through the jungle of weeds was a great contrast to our working week."

Today the garden unfolds as a series of self-contained spaces, each with its own character, within the larger garden landscape, cleverly linked together by pathways and steps. The Arts and Crafts references are evident but so cleverly articulated for the site that the garden is no mere pastiche.

The geometric Red Garden clearly pays homage to Hidcote. Walled in by stone and yew, with contrasting hedges of green box and burgundy berberis, it is coloured in season with poppies, tulips, dahlias, orange lilies and, of course, red roses. The bright-red *Rosa* 'Parkdirektor Riggers' decorates one wall.

In the rose garden proper, 12 box-edged rectangles are filled with roses in white, cream, yellow and apricot to match the stone of the house. The axis of the central path extends through the lawn (the only part of Potts's garden design that remains) with a long reflecting pool edged in box. In other areas, herbaceous borders, topiary-framed steps and a Hornbeam Walk are all modelled on historical precedents.

Follow this Hornbeam Walk down steps that lead deep into the valley below and a magical, informal woodland area opens up. A burbling stream runs through the greenery, flowing down to the open water. This area, shaded by many of Potts's original trees, including nine gigantic oaks, is home to camellias, rhododendrons and indigenous New Zealand species, such as mahoe, lancewoods and silver ferns, all thriving in the damp and sheltered environment.

"I'm not a believer in having everything open to view; where the view is all, and you can't escape it," says Sir Miles. "We have tried to frame the views so you can see the garden in stages." Perhaps the one exception to this idea is the recently created amphitheatre designed for outdoor concerts. Stone-edged paths now lead to the amphitheatre, which was created from the 140 tonnes of house stone removed after the earthquake.

At Ohinetahi, the strong north-south and east-west axes provide botanical and spatial surprises enticing the garden visitor to explore from one garden space to another. Carefully composed sightlines reveal views, garden ornaments, magnificent trees and sculptures by leading New Zealand artists. It's a superb garden where knowledge and love of architecture and plants are beautifully and memorably linked together. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Governors Bay RD1, Lyttelton, Christchurch, New Zealand.
Tel + 64 (0)3 329 9852.
Open The garden is open weekdays, September to April, 10am-4pm.
Sir Miles has gifted Ohinetahi to the people of New Zealand, and has established the Ohinetahi Charitable Trust which oversees the maintenance and development of the property.
You can read more about the garden in: *Ohinetahi: Garden, House and Art* by Sir Miles Warren. £32.99, including p&p.
To order, email smilesw@xtra.co.nz

6 native plants chosen by Sir Miles

1 *Cordyline australis*
Widely known by the names cabbage tree and cabbage palm, this is a characteristic feature of the New Zealand landscape. 6m. AGM[*]. RHS H3, USDA 8b-11[†].

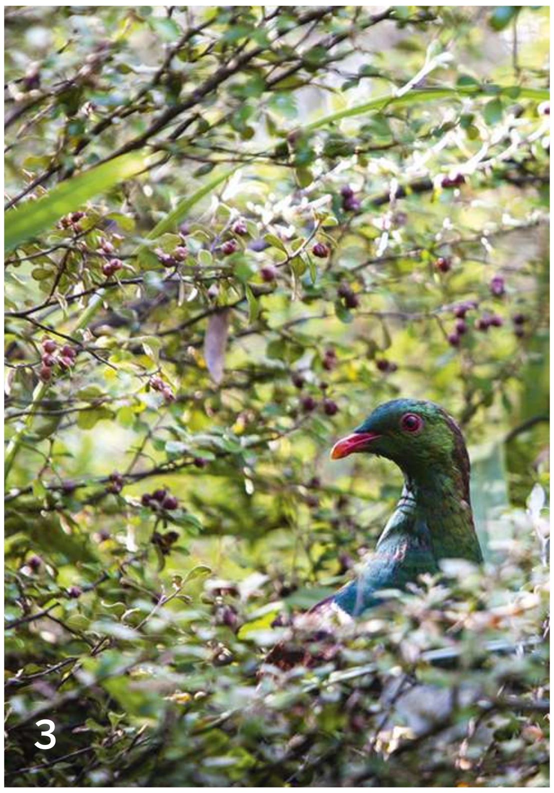
2 *Quercus robur*
This common English oak, seen off to the left, is one of the remaining 19th-century plantings. It overlooks a beautiful view down the harbour towards Lyttleton, Christchurch's deep water port, and is surrounded by native shrubs.
12m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-10a.

3 This unknown seedling, possibly a species of *Coprosma*, is a favourite food of the New Zealand pigeon (also pictured).

4 *Phormium tenax* 'Variegatum'
The stiff leaves on these large clumping plants, native to New Zealand, are valued for their dramatic effect.
3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 8a-11.

5 *Astelia nervosa*
Grows in tighter clumps than its close relation *Astelia chathamica*.
1.2m. USDA 9a-11.

6 *Carex secta*
An endemic sedge common in New Zealand, found from coastal to mountain areas, but only thriving in still water or boggy terrain. 1m. USDA 2a-6b.



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[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

Infinity and beyond

After years of working on their garden, Frank and Annelies Naber employed designer Harry Pierik to bring coherence. He gave them a garden without boundaries

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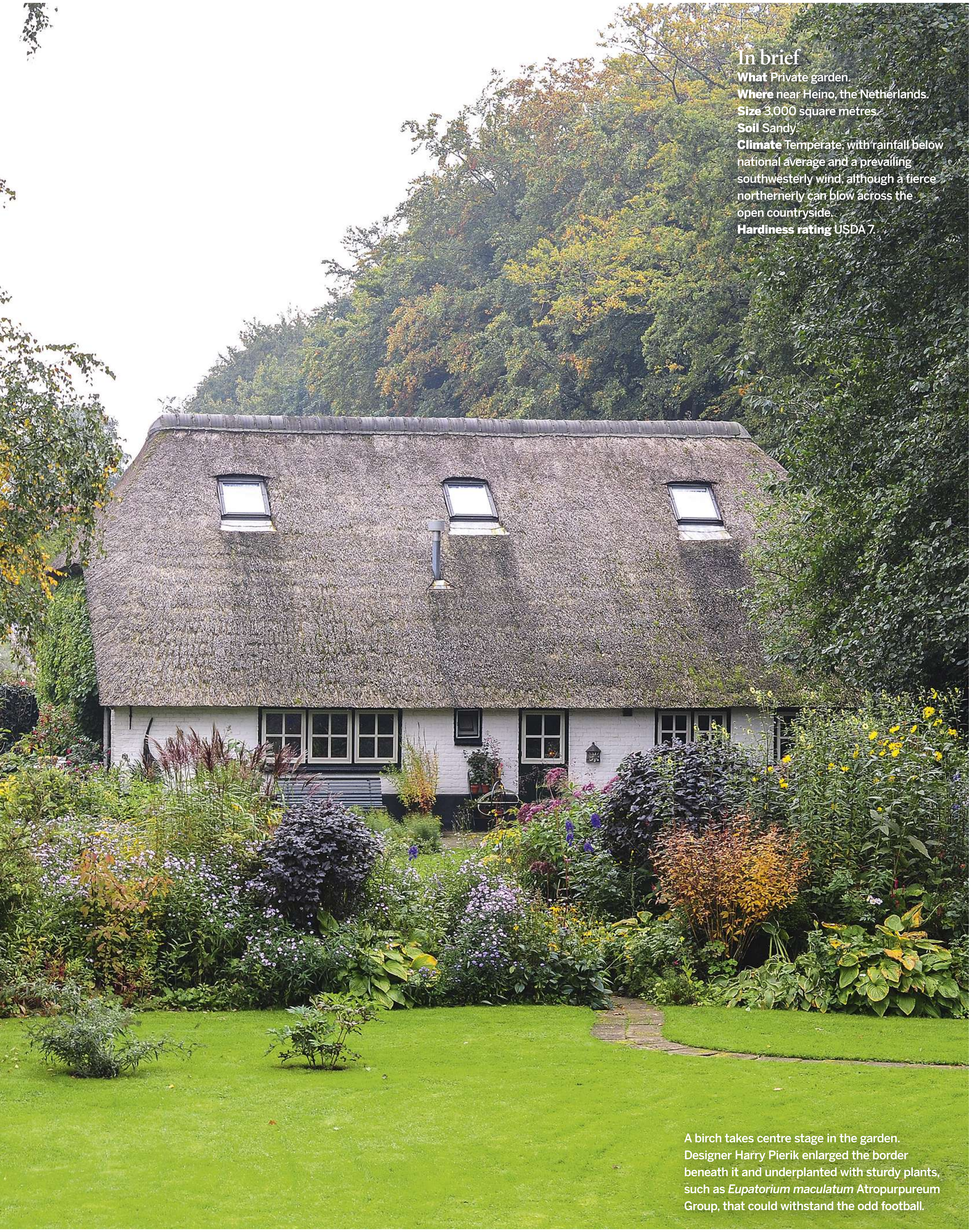
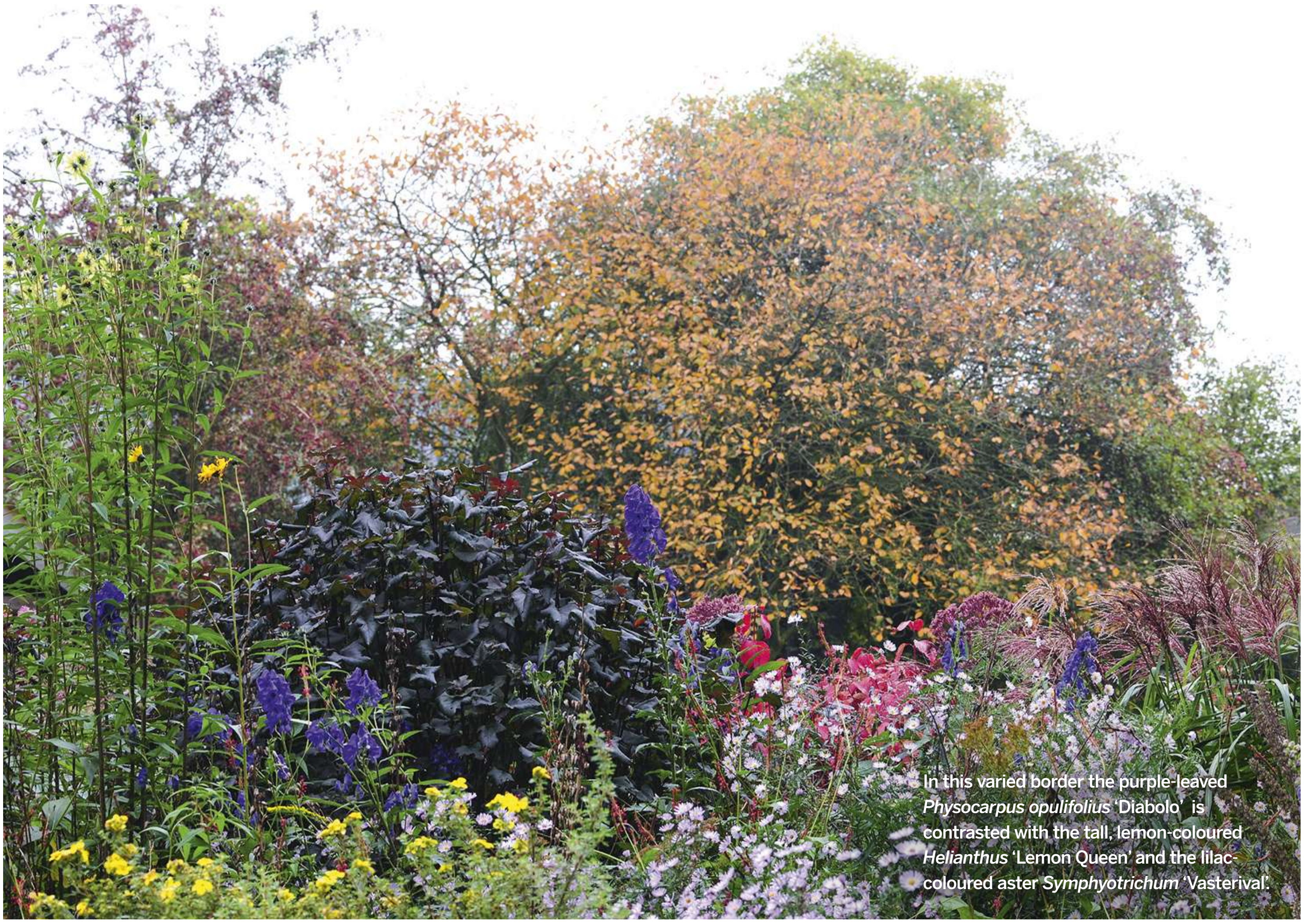


In brief

What Private garden.
Where near Heino, the Netherlands.
Size 3,000 square metres.
Soil Sandy.
Climate Temperate, with rainfall below national average and a prevailing southwesterly wind, although a fierce northernerly can blow across the open countryside.
Hardiness rating USDA 7.

A birch takes centre stage in the garden. Designer Harry Pierik enlarged the border beneath it and underplanted with sturdy plants, such as *Eupatorium maculatum* Atropurpureum Group, that could withstand the odd football.



In this varied border the purple-leaved *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diabolo' is contrasted with the tall, lemon-coloured *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen' and the lilac-coloured aster *Symphyotrichum* 'Vasterival'.

During the ice ages, a glacier pushed through the Dutch Salland region. It defined the landscape, leaving in its wake the Salland Hills and a layer of loam covered by sand. Add to this regular flooding and you have a pretty harsh environment. But since the early Middle Ages smallholders have built dykes, dug canals and planted hedgerows, creating the bocage landscape we can still see today. And it was this landscape that a decade ago inspired garden designer Harry Pierik. Biologists Frank and Annelies Naber had asked his help in redesigning the 3,000 square metre plot behind the 1895 thatched cottage they had bought 17 years earlier, which had once been part of a larger farm. "When we arrived, we dug up 150 birches from around the garden and replanted them along the road, adding *Taxus baccata*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Corylus avellana*, *Alnus glutinosa* and various rhododendrons for a woodland effect," says Frank. "Our children wanted a paddock with pygmy goats and a football pitch, while we planted a vegetable patch and some flower borders close to the house. As the children grew up, the goats lost their appeal, the sandbox became a herb garden and the swing set stood idle. We were at a point where the patchwork we had created needed coherence." Annelies had once visited Harry Pierik's own garden in Zwolle, which she loved, and when the couple saw him at work in a neighbour's garden, the decision was made. "There are two aspects of Harry's designs that I really like: the fluid lines that give a sense of infinity and surprise, and his borders that are chock-a-block with plants," says Annelies. Frank, whose career has revolved around landscape and nature conservation, liked how Harry is always inspired by the *genius loci,* in this case the Salland landscape.

The plot is triangular, with the road and 'home-made woodland' running along the southern side. The western edge borders the neighbouring plot. From east to west, a couple of pollarded alders (*Alnus glutinosa*) and a hedgerow frame the view of the ▷

BEP PIERIK

About the designer

Former school teacher Harry Pierik is a self-taught garden designer who characterises his gardens as "gardens to dream in, gardens that are surprising and exciting, tranquil and harmonious, a living painting yet at the same time practical, with room for a terrace, sandbox or swing". He lets the surrounding landscape into the garden with flowing lines and borders, creating the illusion of infinity. "Planting should be diverse, like a natural bouquet. Beautiful from afar, beautiful up close. A sense of unity but with a variety of details." **tuinharrypierik.nl**

The strip of 'home-made' woodland created by Frank and Annielies shields the garden from the road and provides an excellent backdrop for their borders.

At the front of the cottage, a *Prunus avium* is underplanted with *Hydrangea macrophylla*, an almost mandatory plant in a Dutch cottage garden.

▷ meadows beyond. "Cherry, raspberry, oak, beech, willow… they appeared out of nowhere. All I had to do was train them into a hedge," says Frank. Harry enlarged a central border that runs across the garden where a birch takes centre stage. "Originally there were two, one for each child, but our daughter's birch did not survive a branch breaking off," Frank recalls. Harry started 'drawing' a tear-shape in the soil. "My spade is my pencil," says Harry. "I provide clients with a sketch and a plant list but I find that drawing lines in situ, with a few pickets outlining the design, helps the visualising process." He then took his spade to the rest of the garden. The *Acer campestre* hedge around the vegetable patch went from straight to curvy, as did the borders near the cottage. Anything and everything was dug up but there were lots of plants that Harry recycled. A border near the henhouse showcases *Helianthus giganteus* 'Sheila's Sunshine', *Anemone hupehensis*, *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica' and *Filipendula purpurea*. A shadowy border closer to the house is planted with *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris erythrosora*, *Polypodium vulgare* and *Polystichum polyblepharum*.

Five years ago, Frank found himself still mowing the football lawn even though the children had left home. Time for another change. Inspired by Harry's fluid lines, he designed a curvy pond and let nature take its course. "Most of the plants probably arrived as seeds, brought in by birds," he says. *Stratiotes aloides* keeps the pond crystal clear. Today, Frank and Annelies's garden is exactly as they envisioned – a garden that evolves naturally, where the hoe is confined to the vegetable patch and where wild plants such as toadflax and selfheal are welcomed on the lawn. A garden that belongs in the landscape that surrounds it. ☐

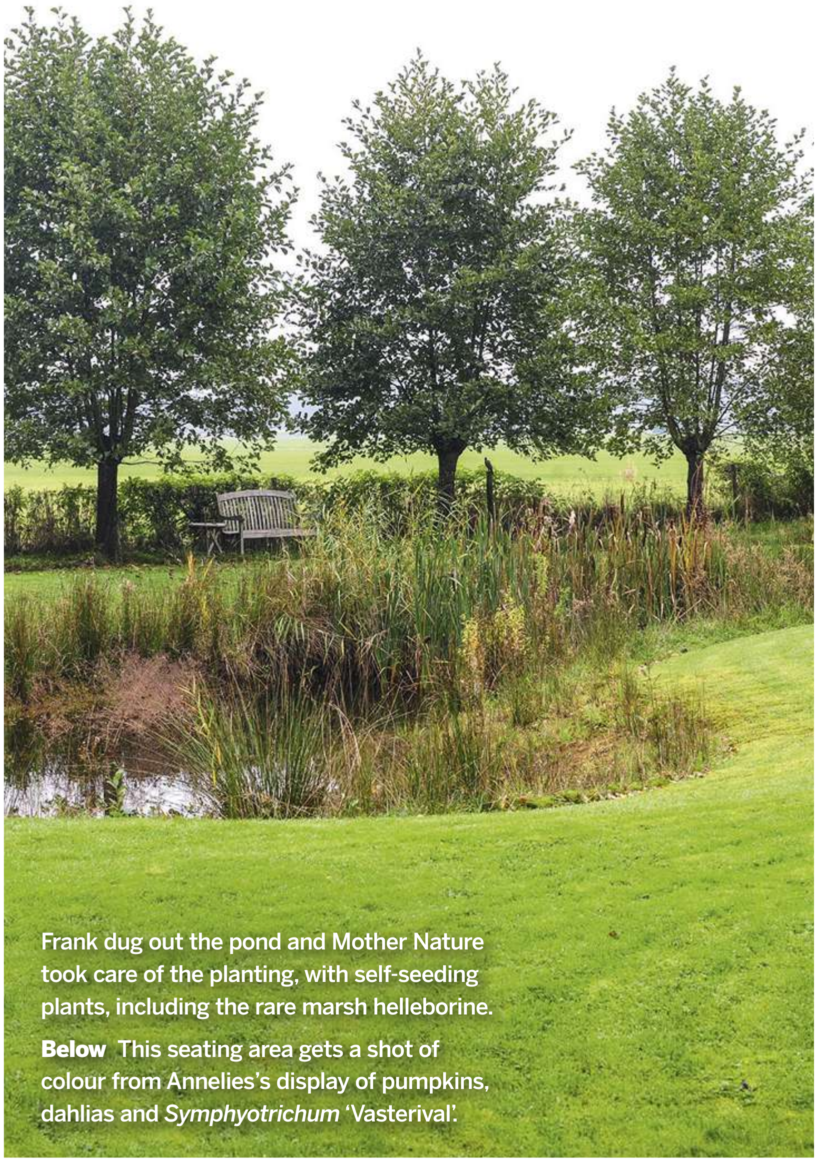
USEFUL INFORMATION

Address De Sallandse Landschapstuin, Heino, Overijssel
8141 MA, the Netherlands.
Tel +31 (0)5723 93508.
Website desallandselandschapstuin.nl
Open By appointment only. See website above for details.

Creating a border

In their brief to Harry for the large central border shown left, Annelies and Frank had some very specific requirements: the birch had to stay at all costs, because their children had planted it; the border had to look good throughout the year without the need for any weeding or hoeing; and it also had to be able to withstand the odd football. Harry started by placing an anti-root membrane around the trunk of the birch to prevent any tree-root suckers pushing through, before adding the soil. He kept the planting dense, which keeps weeds at bay by denying them sufficient room, or light, to grow, and he avoided putting clumps of the same plant together, as this creates a gap in the border when it dies back. Harry's planting mantra is "a wide variety and one of each". At the back of the border he's used the football-proof *Lonicera nitida* and *Spiraea japonica*.

Turn over to discover nine of Harry's favourite plants ▷



Frank dug out the pond and Mother Nature took care of the planting, with self-seeding plants, including the rare marsh helleborine.

Below This seating area gets a shot of colour from Annelies's display of pumpkins, dahlias and *Symphyotrichum* 'Vasterival'.

9 of Harry's favourite plants from Annelies and Frank's garden

1 *Liriope muscari*
Evergreen tuberous perennial, with fresh-green leaves and violet-lavender flowers in late summer and early autumn. Requires moderately fertile soil and partial shade, and is drought-tolerant. 40cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 6a-10b†.

2 *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*
Extremely vigorous deciduous climber that grows at an incredible speed. Will grow absolutely anywhere, from full sun to full shade on a north- or south-facing wall, and in any soil, Also has a high tolerance for pollution. 30m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

3 *Eupatorium maculatum* Atropurpureum Group
This herbaceous perennial, is perfect for the dappled shade of a woodland garden. Will grow in any moist, well-drained soil. Easy to divide in spring or autumn. 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-10b.

4 *Berberis thunbergii* f. *atropurpurea*
Mainly grown for its gorgeous purple-burgundy foliage, with fairly inconspicuous yellow flowers followed by shiny red berries. Has sharp spines so be careful when handling. Needs full sun to partial shade. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-10b.

5 *Aconitum carmichaelii* 'Arendsii'
A valuable plant for extending the season, with a long display of blue-violet flowers. Requires consistently moist soil; don't let it dry out between waterings. Attractive to bees and butterflies. Sun to partial shade. Highly toxic. 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

6 *Symphyotrichum lateriflorum* 'Chloe'
Formerly known as an aster, this clump-forming, herbaceous perennial with attractive daisy-like flowers. Adds colour to the garden in late summer and early autumn. Looks good planted with eupatoriums, heleniums, rudbeckias and miscanthus, and here growing through berberis. 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

7 *Matteuccia struthiopteris*
A deciduous fern with bright-green fronds. Perfect as low-maintenance underplanting. Handsome in spring too, with its vase-shaped clumps. Needs partial to full shade, in a sheltered position, and moist but well-drained soil. A fairly aggressive spreader. 1.8m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 2a-10b.

8 *Veronicastrum virginicum*
A tall, herbaceous perennial that thrives in full sun or partial shade. Attractive to bees and butterflies. Water regularly but don't overwater. Easy to propagate by division in spring. 1.8m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

9 *Tricyrtis formosana*
Spotted flowers, which range in colour from pink to lavender and bloom in late summer to early autumn. They're best grown in humus-rich soil, in deep or partial shade and are much loved by slugs and snails. If you allow the pods to dry on the plant, you can collect seed, or propagate by division in spring. Mulch in very cold winters. 90cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

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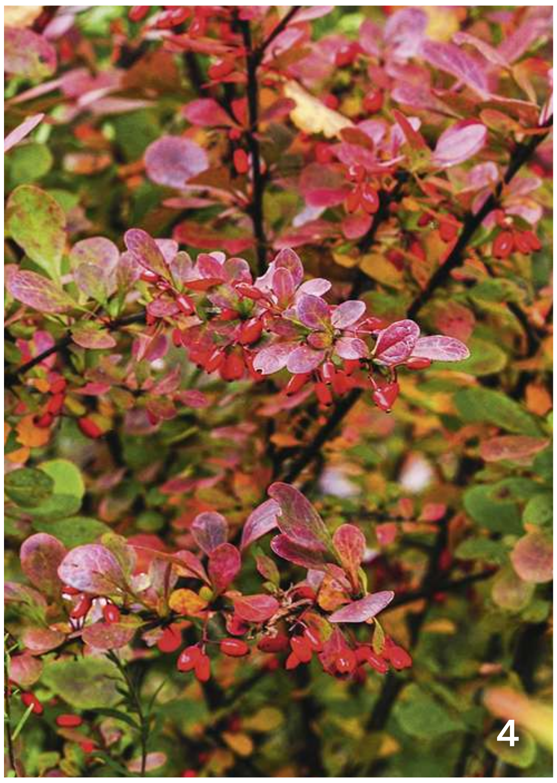

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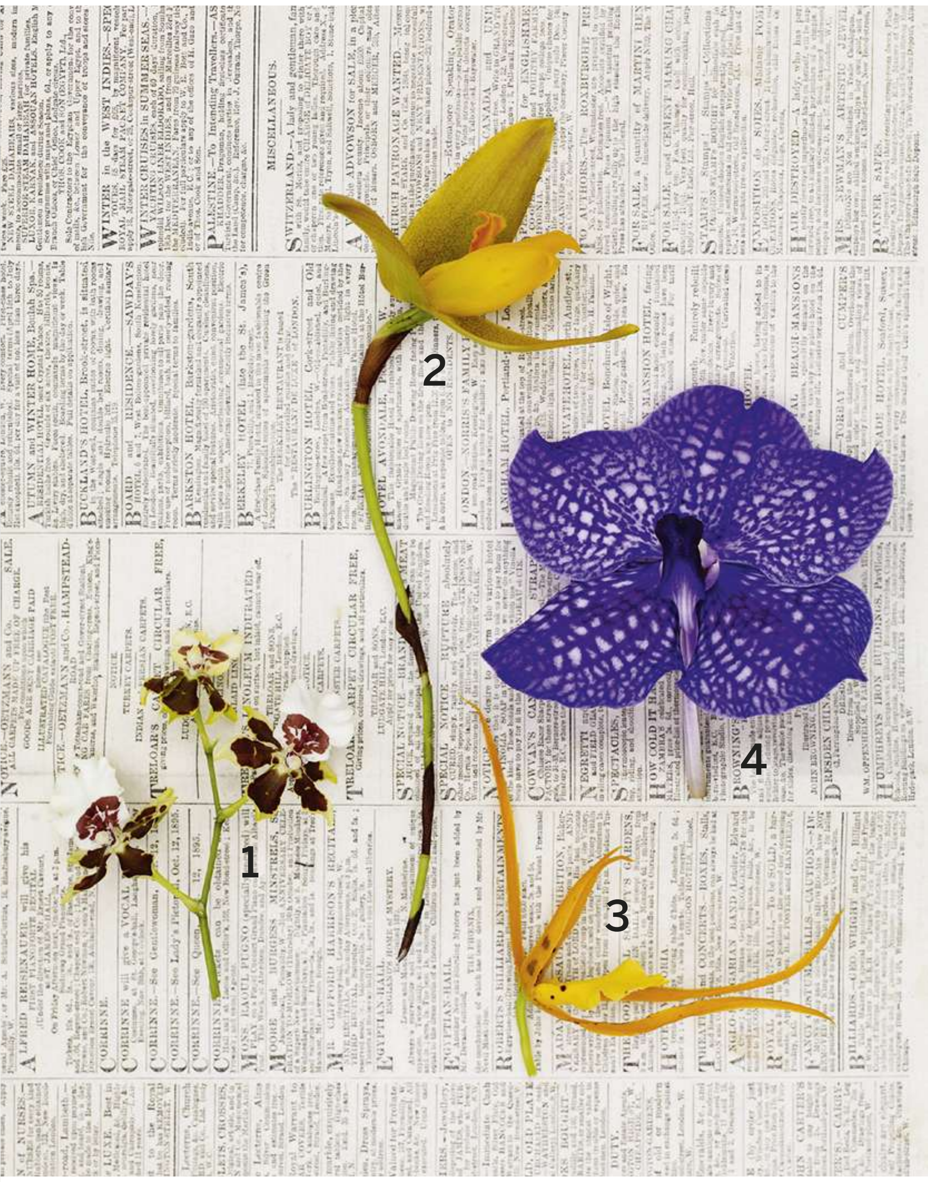
Final flourish

Head gardener Matthew Reese ends his container-planting series in style with arrangements to brighten up autumn's darker days

WORDS MATTHEW REESE PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY



Hot house party

At this time of year, I often bring orchids in from the greenhouse to add a dash of exotic colour. When I do, I find it's more decorative and practical to display them in a watertight container than in a pot with drainage holes. This majolica jardinière is the perfect host. Its blue base fades into turquoise and if more blue were lost from the turquoise glaze it would become green, so the smart green orchid foliage makes a comfortable progression.

How to achieve the look

One of the trickiest aspects of combining orchids is that different orchids like different temperatures and light levels, so I'll use them in the main house or conservatory only for temporary weekend displays. Arching out on long sprays is x *Colmanara* 'Green Valley' Wildcat Series; its flowers are persistent and it is a vigorous, easy orchid that's best grown in coarse bark with daytime temperatures of 18-24°C and 13-18°C at night. Another good orchid for the novice grower is *Brassia* 'Orange Delight' (16-28°C day, 12°C night) with vivid spidery flowers that have a spicy scent. You can grow it in the house provided you give it humid conditions and keep it out of direct sunlight and drafts. Next to it is *Lycaste aromatica* (20-26°C day, 15°C night) a wonderful, strong-growing orchid that is scented heavily of cinnamon. It needs shade and humidity. The large, purple, tessellated flowers are x *Vandachostylis* 'Blue Magic' (18-25°C day, 12°C night), which has strong, ladder-like foliage and very long roots. Vandas need good light levels, although not direct light, and high levels of humidity. They can be grown in bark or as an air-plant provided the environment has high humidity. For this display, all of the plants are held in place with wire and left in their original orchid pots. I have added coarse bark around the roots to help retain moisture. Some of the roots are too long to fit in the pot and are allowed to drape over the side. The whole display is misted twice daily with rainwater; it is particularly important to use rainwater as hard water will cause lime deposits to mark the foliage.

Plants (see above left)

1 x *Colmanara* 'Green Valley' Wildcat Series Needs shade and high humidity.

2 *Lycaste aromatica*
A good scented orchid, perfect for the first-time grower.

3 *Brassia* 'Orange Delight'
An easy orchid that can be grown in the house.

4 x *Vandachostylis* 'Blue Magic'
Can be grown in bark or without as an air-plant.

Recommended suppliers

(for all three displays)

- **Burnham Orchids**
  Tel 01626 352233, orchids.uk.com
- **Dino Pellizzaro**
  Tel +33 (0)4 93 64 18 4
- **Penwood Nurseries**
  Tel 01635 254366,
  penwoodnurseries.co.uk
- **Wisley Plant Centre**
  Tel 01483 211113,
  rhs.org.uk/wisleyplantcentre

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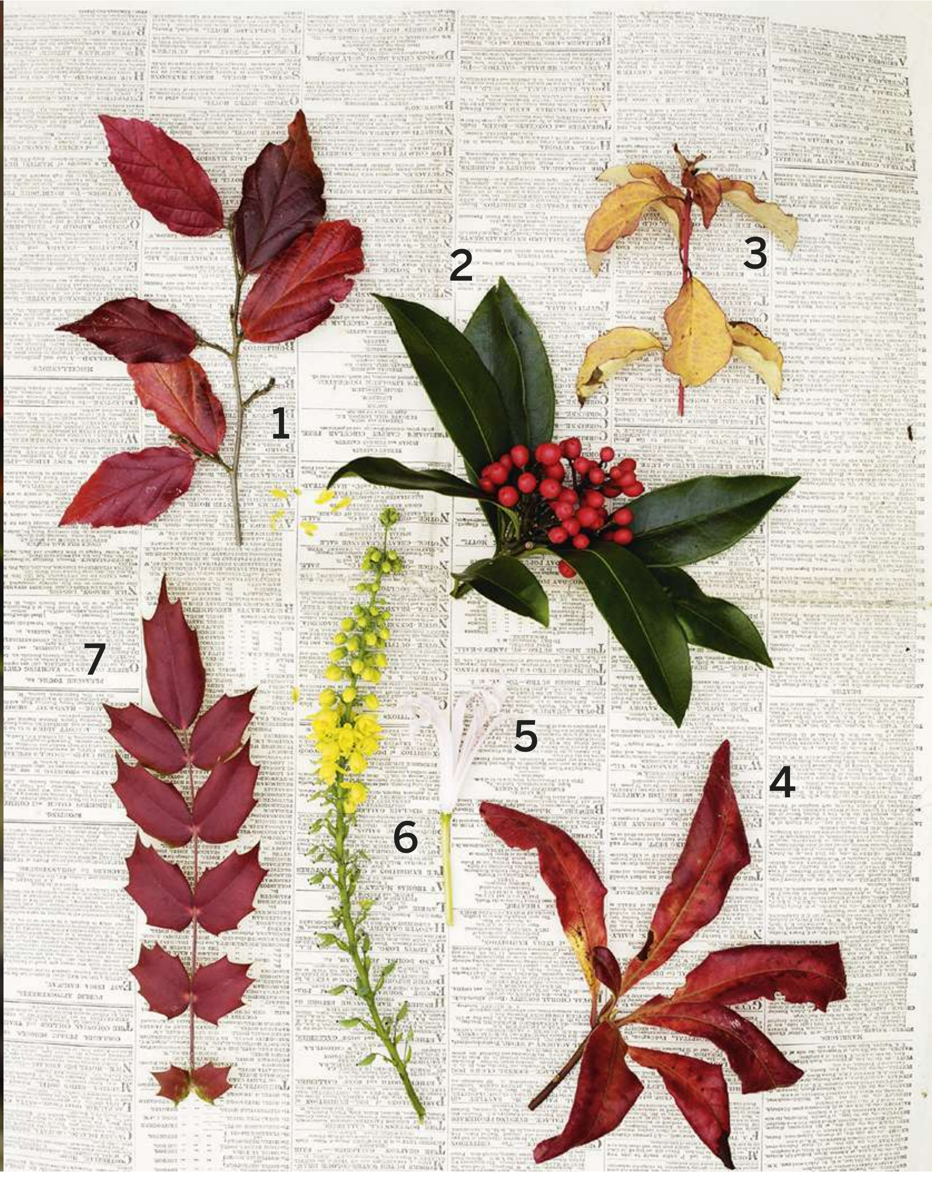
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†]Hardiness ratings given where available.



Warm corner

As the days draw in, the house shifts its focus indoors, intensifying the demand for plant decorations in and around it. With so few flowering plants available, we're grateful we can call on autumn's rich tapestry to sustain us. This mock barrel vessel, made from oak slats and steel hoops, has galvanised handles to make it easier to move around the garden. Here it's dressed with warm autumn foliage and berries along with few hardy flowering plants to lift the mood.

How to achieve the look

This is a temporary arrangement made purposely for a special occasion, such as a weekend when the main house is bustling with guests. The autumn foliage sets a fiery tone and is contrasted well against the dark green leaves of *Skimmia japonica* subsp. *reevesiana*. This particular *Skimmia* is a hermaphrodite form that will reliably produce vermillion berries. As a rule, it is always more aesthetically rewarding to set vibrant autumn colour off with a steadfast evergreen. I can remember seeing the large, brilliant red leaves of *Vitis coignetiae* scrambling through an ivy at Great Dixter in East Sussex and thinking how heavenly the effect was in the gentle October light. Above the *Skimmia* is *Mahonia japonica*, which turns red in the autumn when it has been stressed. Here in the garden we have restricted this plant by growing it in a pot that is smaller than ideal, which encourages it to turn a smouldering shade of deep red. The ochre notes are supplied by *Cornus sanguinea* 'Anny's Winter Orange', which, as its name suggests, also boasts vivid stem colour throughout winter. On the right with sumptuous ripe-fig purple foliage, is x *Sycoparrotia semidecidua* 'Purple Haze'. Clusters of the fresh, yellow-green flower spikes of *Mahonia* x *media* 'Charity' top the display, and dotted through the arrangement are the soft-pink spidery flowers of *Nerine bowdenii* 'Vesta K'. In cold, still weather the deciduous autumn leaves in this arrangement might cling on for a fortnight but will shatter in warmer conditions. Either way, when the show is over, the arrangement will be dismantled.

Plants

1 x *Sycoparrotia semidecidua* 'Purple Haze'
Medium shrub with dark, plum-coloured foliage. 3m. USDA 6†.

2 *Skimmia japonica* subsp. *reevesiana*
Small evergreen shrub with red fruits. 1m. USDA 7a-9b.

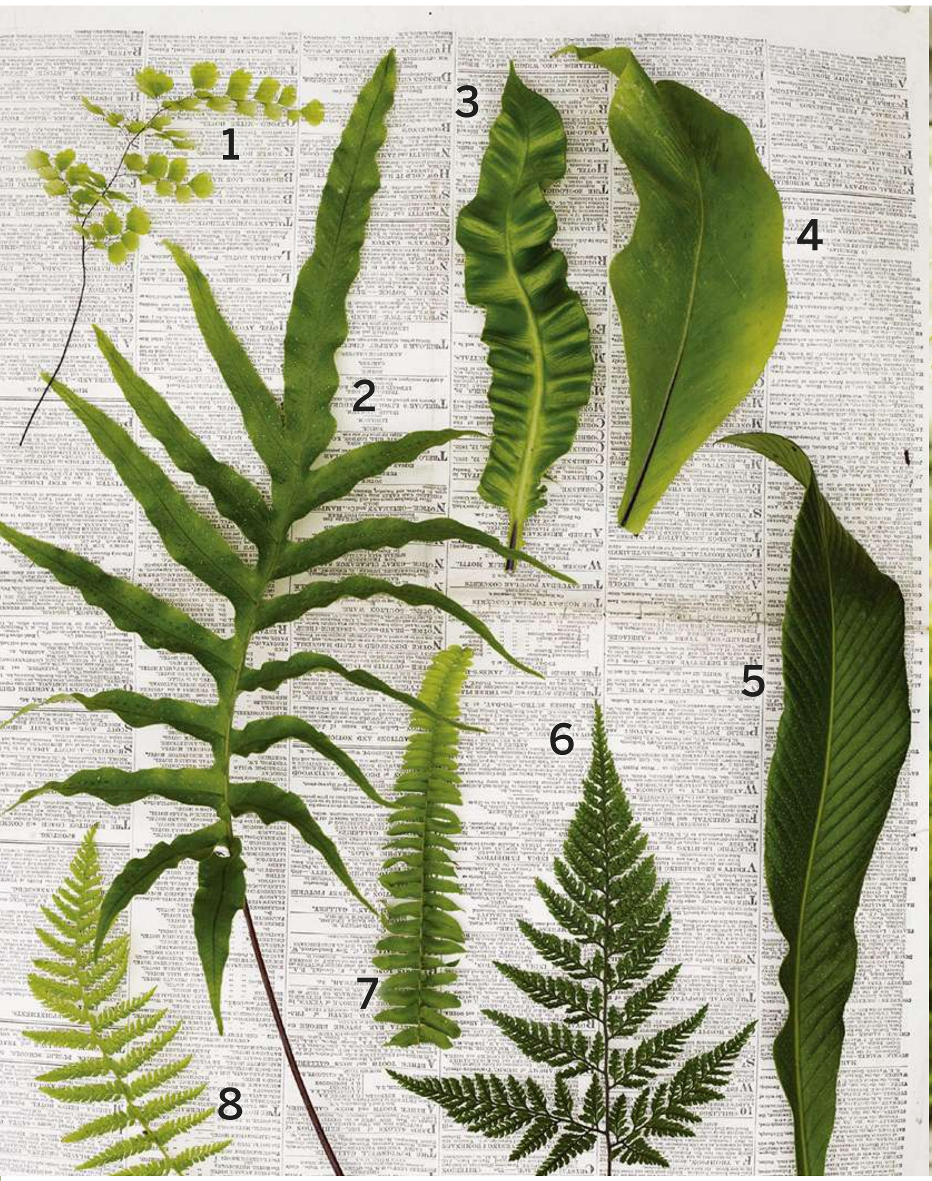
3 *Cornus sanguinea* 'Anny's Winter Orange'
Dogwood grown for its vibrant stem colour. 2.5m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 5.

4 *Rhododendron luteum*
Red autumn foliage. 4m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

5 *Nerine bowdenii* 'Vesta K'
A pale-pink form of the hardy nerine. 50cm. USDA 7.

6 *Mahonia* x *media* 'Charity'
Large shrub with glossy foliage. 4m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7.

7 *Mahonia japonica*
Evergreen shrub with scented, lemon flowers. 2m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6.



Green grotto

Indoor ferns always add a slightly exotic feel to conservatory displays. I love their graceful elegance, and frequently use them for displays in the house and – before frosts bite – sheltered parts of the garden. This arrangement features a collection of ferns presented in a vintage wooden dough bowl I found at a plant fair. The display is made for instant effect and should last for about a week or two, before returning the ferns to the humid atmosphere of the greenhouse.

How to achieve the look

Ferns make elegant displays as many species feature handsome foliage over a long period with a huge range of green shades, shapes, textures and habits. In putting this arrangement together I have contrasted the different elements to highlight the attributes of each plant. The individuals should be placed close enough to link hands with one other, avoiding gaps, but not so close as to appear squashed. The bird's nest fern, *Asplenium nidus*, makes a strong funnel shape with polished, stiff-blades, and contrasts well against the softer, feathery foliage of the Boston fern, *Nephrolepis exaltata*, spilling over the lip of the bowl. Next to this, is the even more delicate maidenhair fern, *Adiantum capillus-veneris,* with leaflets arranged on fine, black, thread-like stems, which shimmer at the mere mention of a breeze. Nestled at the back is the male fern, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, with elegant fronds peering this way and that through the leggy-petioles of the striking *Phlebodium aureum*. This fern boasts elegant blue-green fronds with a fluidity and a presence that make it a very desirable plant. Also quite special is the epiphytic *Niphidium crassifolium*, known as the graceful fern. The ascending, undulating leaves are rigid and attractively ribbed with a herring-bone pattern. The shape is quite different from that of *Asplenium nidus* 'Crispy Wave' directly below it, which has a tight vortex of crinkly leaves. Neighbouring these two substantial ferns is the elegant rabbit's foot fern, *Davallia solida* var. *fejeensis*, with pretty, airy fronds that make a good change in texture, shape and size.

Plants

1 *Adiantum capillus-veneris*
Best with high humidity and out of direct sunlight. 45cm. USDA 5a-8b.
2 *Phlebodium pseudoaureum*
Superlative fern – good form, habit and colour. 30cm. USDA 8a-10b.
3 *Asplenium nidus* 'Crispy Wave'
House plant that prefers free-draining compost. 1.2m. USDA 9a-11.
4 *Asplenium nidus*
Prefers free-draining compost. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H1B, USDA 11-12.
5 *Niphidium crassifolium*
Epiphytic so prefers free-draining soil. 45cm. USDA 10a-11b.
6 *Dryopteris filix-mas*
Will grow everywhere but bogs. 1m. USDA 4a-8b.
7 *Nephrolepis exaltata*
Good for cooler humid areas of the home. 90cm. AGM. USDA 10a-12.
8 *Davallia solida* var. *fejeensis*
Happiest in a hanging basket in free-draining substrate. 1.2m. USDA 10a-11.

Richard Deverell

A businessman rather than a botanist, the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, has spent his first three years in the role attempting to reverse its fortunes

WORDS JODIE JONES PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

The 15th director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is no stranger to controversy. After all, Richard Deverell was head of children's programmes at the BBC through a media storm over the fraudulent naming of a *Blue Peter* kitten. Yet when he took up the directorship at Kew in May 2012, the botanic garden was facing a financial crisis that threatened its very identity.

He knew taking over the helm would come with its challenges. "For 170 years of Kew's history, the role had only gone to eminent botanists," he says. "And then I turned up."

Deverell was born in Southampton into a family he describes as "the very definition of normal", and was a bright boy in an average school, where he was so bored his mischief almost got him expelled.

"Then I saw O levels looming and a switch flipped inside me." He astonished everyone by attaining the school's best-ever results and going on to become its first pupil to win a place at the University of Cambridge, where he studied natural sciences.

"I loved it from the first day," says Richard, who threw himself into everything from boxing to the Cambridge University Explorers' and Travellers' Club. But at the end of his degree, with no clear vocation, he took up the default career for bright graduates in the late 1980s – he went into management consultancy.

"I don't regret those years. Management consultancy gave me an amazing breadth of experience, I earned a good salary and met the woman who became my wife." But it wasn't quite enough.

"I felt I wanted to do something where I could be a force for good," he says. Richard resigned from his job and spent three months travelling northern India, including an epic solo trek through the small Buddhist state of Zanskar.

"All my life I will be proud of that journey. I walked for 15 days through remote mountain passes and stayed with Buddhist monks in an 11th-century monastery carved into a cliff face."

By the time he returned to Heathrow, his naturally slender frame was so emaciated that an aid worker lingering by the arrivals gate offered him an emergency hostel place. Instead, he took a six-month contract at the BBC in the corporate strategy unit. His boss was John Birt, for whom he still has great admiration and affection, and he was to stay at the BBC in various roles for the next two decades. "It ticked my top two boxes – it was interesting and it was important."

From strategy, he transferred to BBC News and then into children's programmes where the *Blue Peter* scandal presented a monumental challenge. "It was really, really tough," he recalls. "I remember going home and telling my wife I couldn't face going back to work the next day. In a crisis, the truth about people is revealed. It is horrible, but it forges you."

He was a busy man, to say the least, but admits to a low boredom threshold and has managed to squeeze in an awful lot of outside interests over the years. For a start, he has three young children. He is also a keen triathelete, an enthusiastic bread maker and, from 2003-2009, he was a trustee of Kew. "Kew was already important to me. I lived nearby and applied for the post after seeing a newspaper advertisement. I wanted to do what I could to help."

Meanwhile, back at the BBC, he spent three years as chief operating officer for BBC North before deciding it was finally time to leave the corporation. He had just taken an interim role at Ofcom when he discovered Kew was looking for a new director.

"Having been a trustee I knew Kew needed significant change, and that restructuring would be a challenge – although I may have underestimated quite the scale of the challenge.

"We were running out of money and we had to ask ourselves why we merited taxpayers' support. We needed to sharpen up the science and work out how we measured our success.

"Many people are supportive. Many people are concerned," he adds, with fine understatement. "But no one else has come up with an alternative solution to the problem."

Richard's ideas, ranging from staff restructuring to the marketing of consultancy services to businesses, have done nothing to allay the fears of traditionalists that he is a businessman, not a scientist.

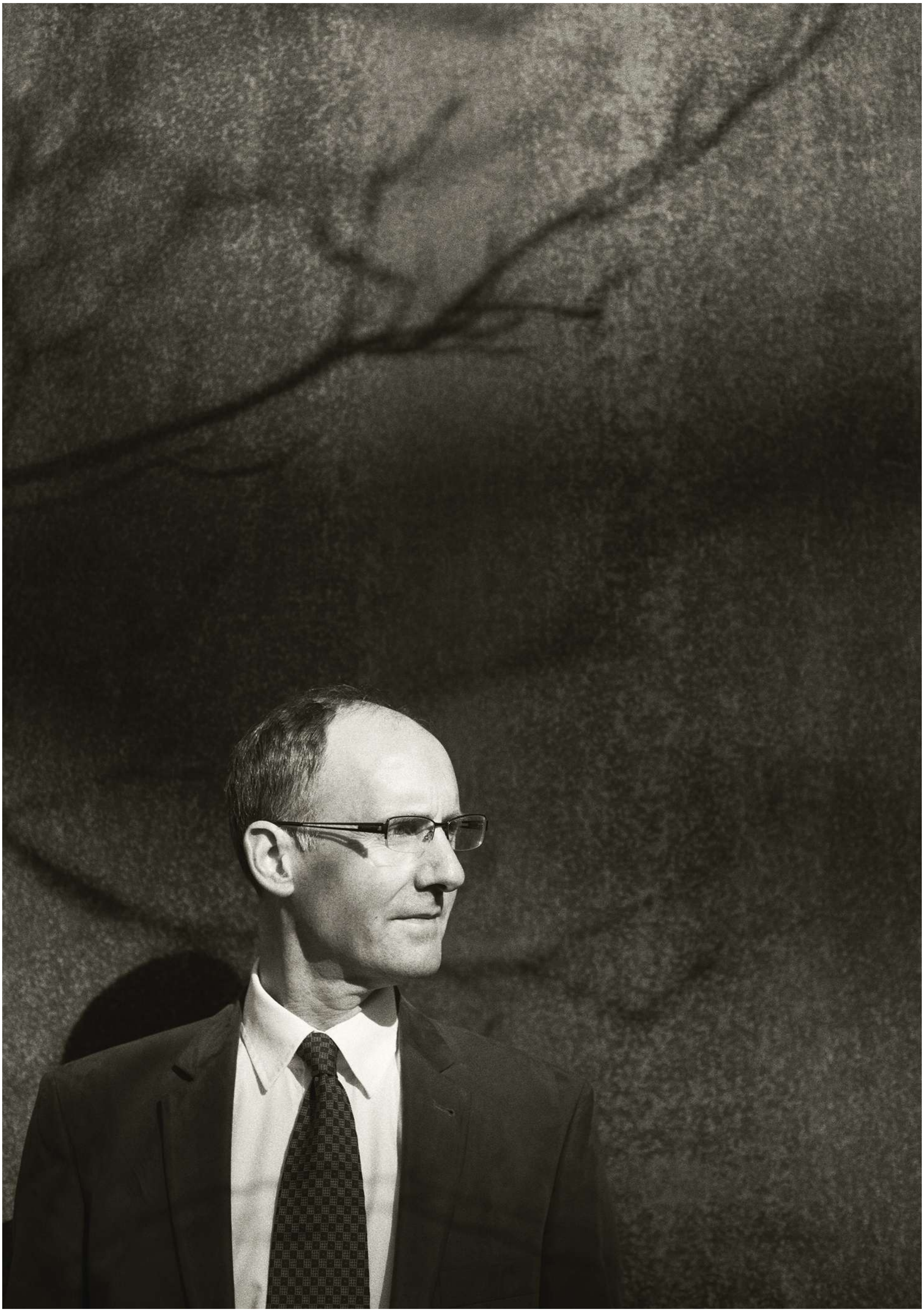
Richard, however, is quite clear on his priorities. "This is a botanic garden. We have a rich layer of science and conservation here. We should also demonstrate world-class horticulture." However, none of that would be possible, he argues, if the organisation was bankrupt."I spent the first year getting the senior team right and it will take five years to get the overall structure right."

It is unlikely to be plain sailing, but it will certainly be interesting. And, in his spare time, he would like to master Beethoven's sonatas. Given that he hasn't yet learned to play the piano, he shouldn't be succumbing to boredom any time soon. □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB.
Tel 020 8332 5655, kew.org

NEXT MONTH Landscape and garden designer Bunny Guinness.

"I knew Kew needed significant change, and that restructuring would be a challenge – although I may have underestimated quite the scale of the challenge"



Trees for front gardens

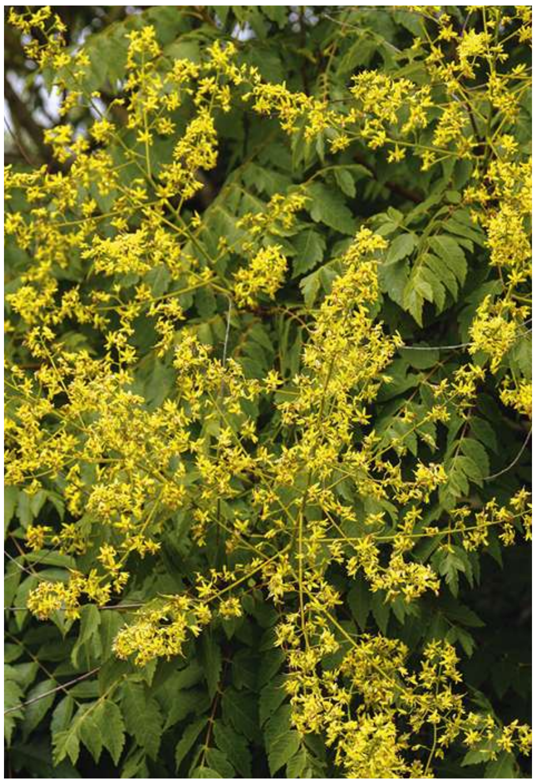
Trees offer many advantages and countless pleasures, but for a small garden you need to choose carefully

WORDS **TONY KIRKHAM**

In brief

What A range of small, deciduous trees that are suitable for planting in front gardens.
Origins Many of the trees featured originate in Asia, although some are European natives.
Size All but one of the trees are under 12m in height with a relatively narrow crown. Many are much smaller, some as small as 4m, and some can be grown as shrubs.
Season All the trees have been chosen for their long season of interest.

GAP PHOTOS/HOWARD RICE - CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BOTANIC GARDENS



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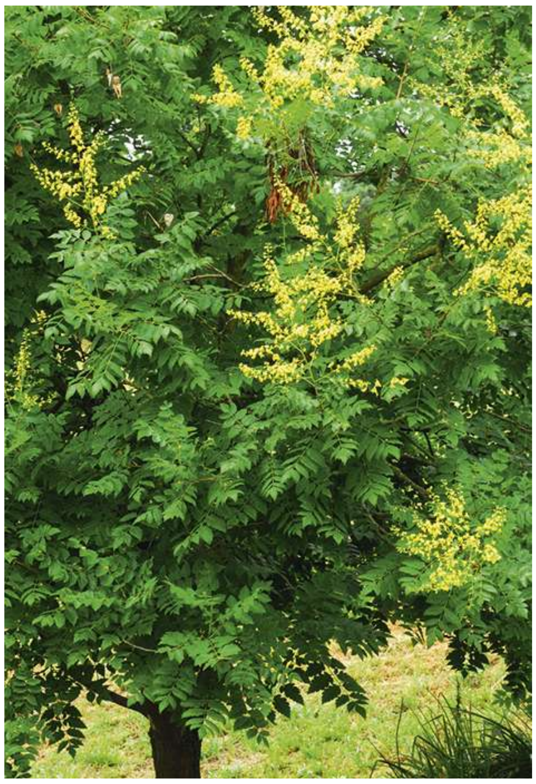

ARCO IMAGES GMBH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Koelreuteria paniculata

I first saw this tree (shown above and left) in 2003, growing wild in a dry river valley in Sichuan, China, and was deeply impressed by the profuse number of large, terminal yellow flowers it was bearing. These flowers turn into large, panicles of dry, bladder-like fruits, each containing a hard seed. Known as the golden rain tree, it's a drought-tolerant species that can be grown either as a small, multi-stemmed tree or on a single trunk. It will develop a perfectly rounded crown, and the pinnate leaves, which are bronze when they first appear, turn to green and eventually yellow in the autumn. **Height (H)** 5-17m. **Crown spread (S)** 10m. USDA 6b[†].

Tony Kirkham is the head of Arboretum at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the author of several books on trees.

Over the past few decades, trees have been disappearing from the UK's front gardens. More and more people are now removing plants and paving over their lawns in order to create or extend driveways for the ever-growing fleets of family cars. The average suburban front garden now has considerably less space left for planting, which not only means we're creating very barren, boring hard landscapes, but also means we have far fewer plants and trees, in particular, capable of taking up rainwater. As a direct result there is now a greater volume of rainwater run-off finding its way into roads and down drains, which is one of the major causes of severe flooding after storms. That's reason enough for us all to grow more all types of plants, but trees have even more benefits.

Trees give us privacy and a sense of enclosure. They help to absorb noise pollution as well as some dust and air pollutants, giving us cleaner, fresher air. In summer, a deciduous broad-leaved tree will help to cool temperatures inside the house and provide shade for driveways, keeping the interior of cars parked beneath it more comfortable to use. Trees attract wildlife and, while some of this wildlife may not always be entirely welcome (as my family whose car-washing bills increase when they park beneath the tree in my driveway will attest), it is important from an ecological perspective that we increase the biodiversity in our garden and provide a refuge for many species of insects and birds in urban areas.

Of course, trees have some disadvantages. I have a beautiful hybrid flowering crab apple, *Malus* x *purpurea*, in my front garden that I love but which is disliked in equal measures by my wife and neighbours. When it flowers, for one week in spring, it lights up the avenue like a bright, purple beacon, but then the thousands of petals begin to fall and get walked into the house. It also suffers from apple scab, which causes leaves to fall prematurely throughout the summer making the driveway untidy. My neighbours don't like the shade it casts or the early

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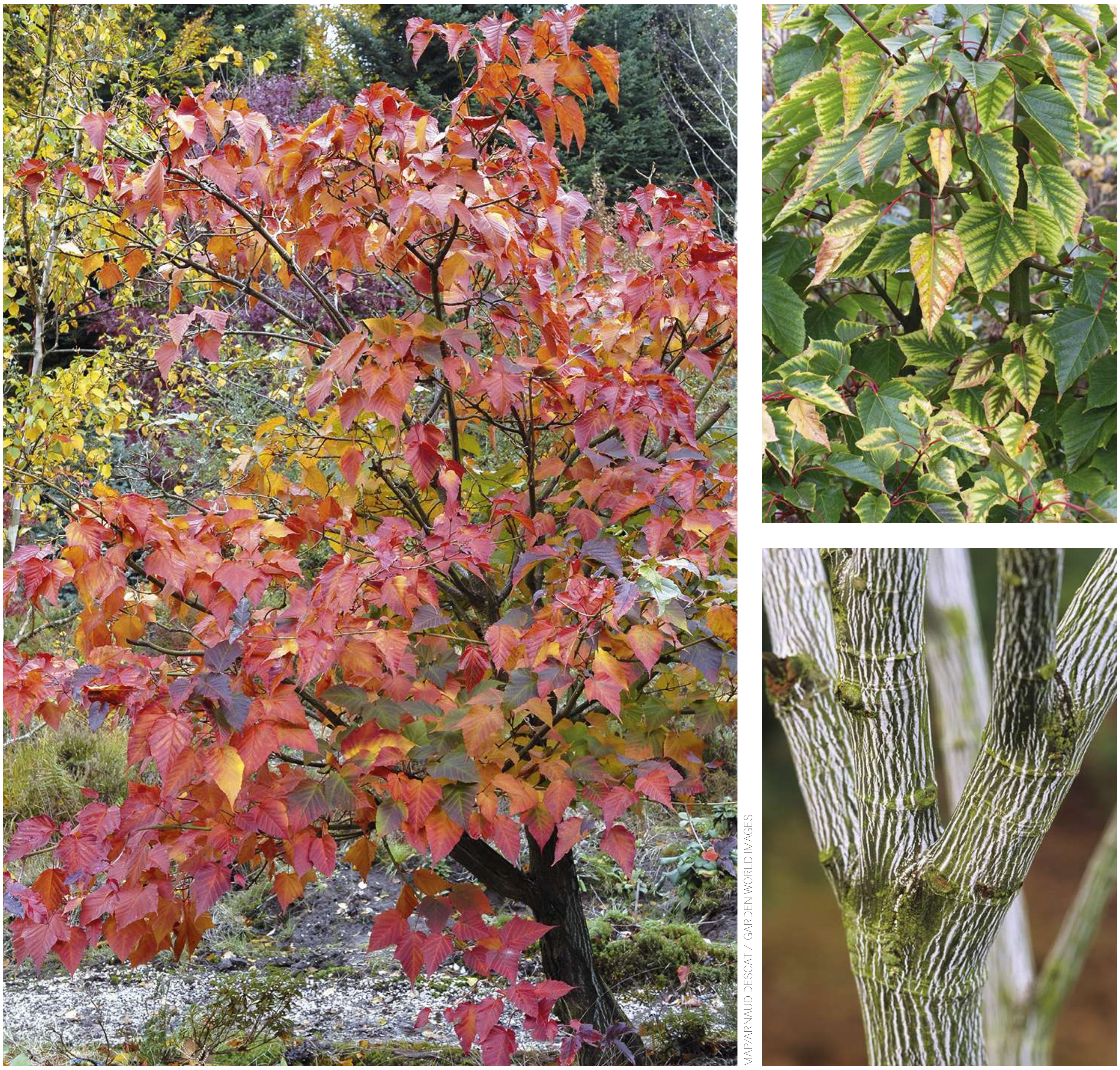
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

[†]Hardiness ratings given where available.



MAP/ARNAUD DESCAT / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

GAP PHOTOS/MAXINE ADCOCK

JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

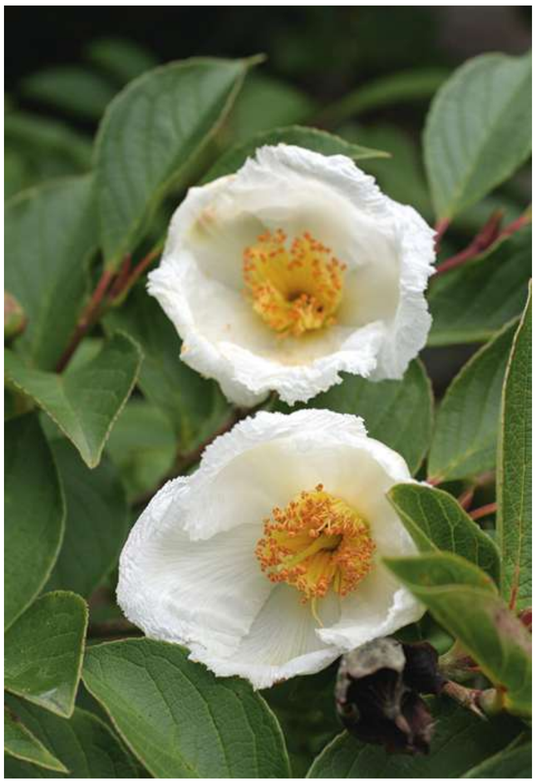
Acer capillipes

Introduced from Japan in 1892 by Charles Sprague Sargent, the first director of Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, this is one of the most beautiful snake bark maples, with a vase-shaped crown and red-tipped branches that hang down with a weeping effect to furnish the lower canopy. Its small, long-pointed, green leaves are attached to the stems by a bright-red petiole. In autumn the leaves turn a spectacular orange-red, highlighting the long, green pendant samara fruits. Grow it on a short trunk to best show off its main attribute, the grey-white striped bark. **H** 5-8m. **S** 4-8m. USDA 6a.

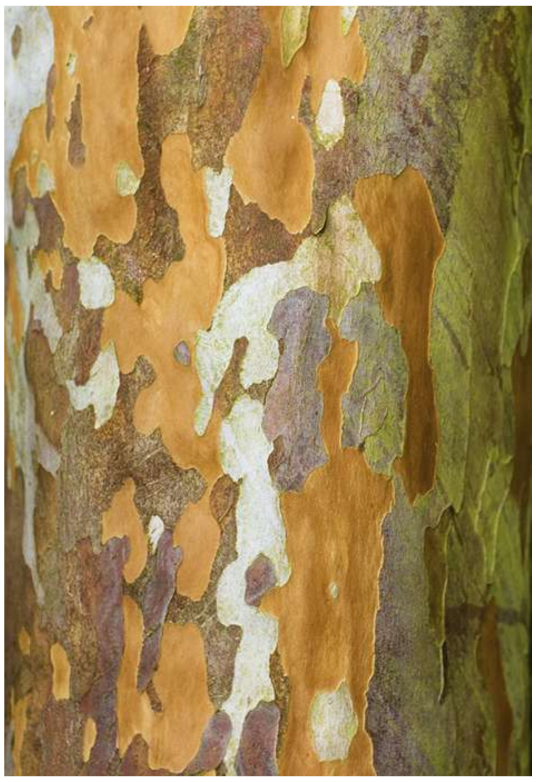
▷ morning calls from the ring-necked parakeets, which roost throughout summer, and would love to see it felled. Fortunately it doesn't set fruit. Despite these drawbacks, I really like it and justify keeping it on the grounds that it is one of only a handful trees found in front gardens in my neighbourhood.

However, before you plant a tree in your front garden I would suggest you give careful thought to your choice of species – not least for the sake of marital and neighbourly harmony. Ideally, you want a tree that ticks lots of different boxes. Firstly, it should be hard working and provide as many high-value horticultural attributes through the seasons as possible. Size also matters, and when mature, your tree should not outgrow the potentially small planting space. Its roots should be non-invasive so that ultimately they won't damage your house's foundations or push up the block paving; and once the tree reaches maturity, its branches shouldn't encroach into your neighbours' space.

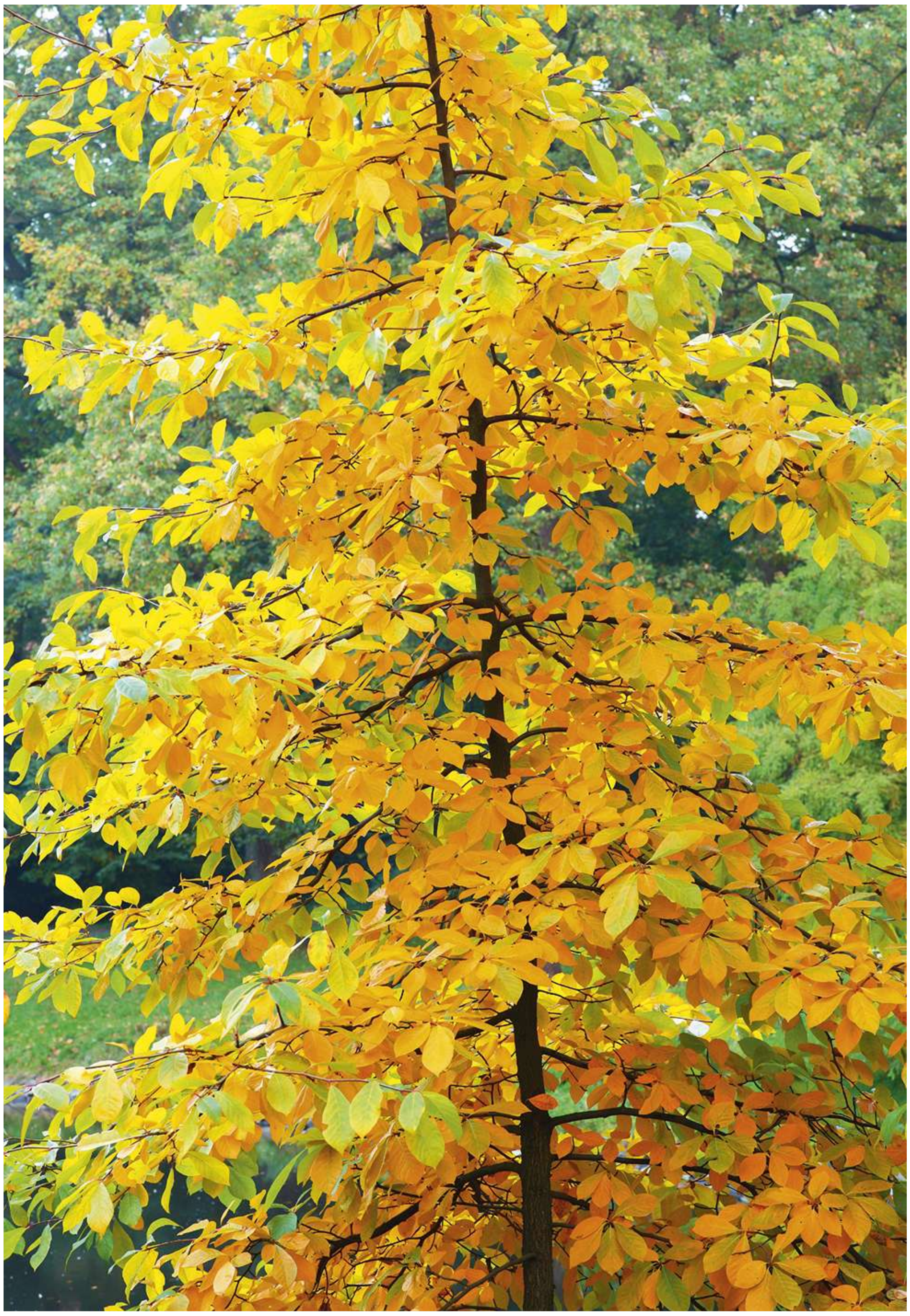
So how do you choose your ideal tree? Height and spread will probably be your first considerations. Given the size of most front gardens, invariably space will be cramped, both above and below ground level, so a tree with a fairly narrow, pyramidal or conical



MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



GAP PHOTOS/RICHARD BLOOM



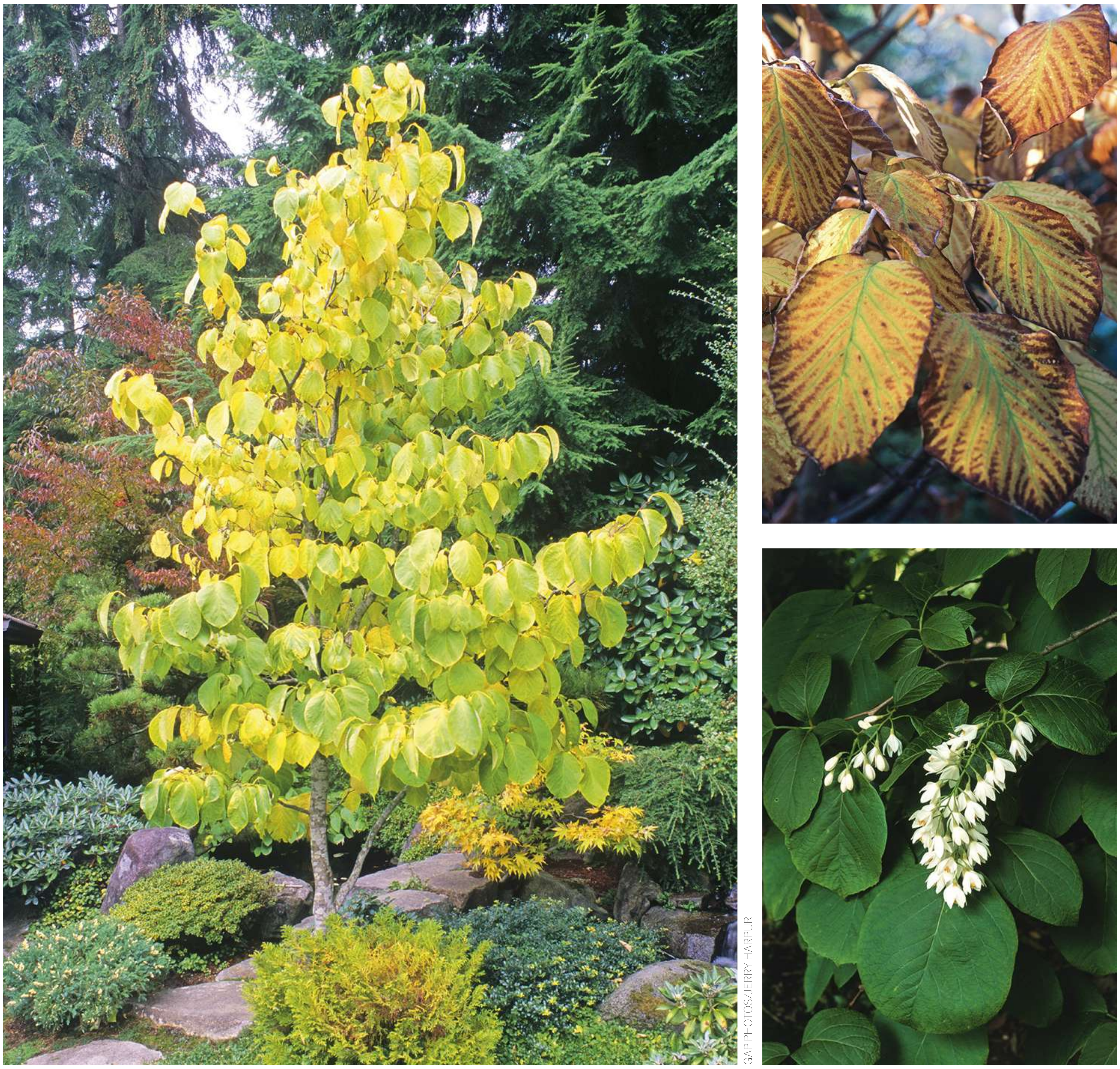
SHAPENCOLOUR / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Stewartia pseudocamellia
Another hard-working tree with a broad, vase-shaped habit and sparse, thin branches. The small, neatly serrated leaves turn into a rich palette of colours in autumn – ranging from yellows to reds and even purples. The trunk has extremely decorative, flaking bark that is made up of many differing shades, and I'd list it among my top five of best trees for bark effect. In midsummer the primrose-yellow stamens are highlighted against the virgin white petals of the flowers, which appear on the tips of the branches, and convert to a brown, dry and woody capsuled fruit. **H** 6-12m. **S** 7-9m. USDA 6a.

crown that will stay within the airspace allocated to it, is a better choice than one with low, heavy and wide-spreading branches.

If privacy is priority then opt for a tree with a well-furnished lower skirt that will act as a screen to passers-by. However, you'll need to be sure this won't impede access for pedestrians or vehicles so choose a tree with a vase-shaped crown (angled, upright branches) or upright main branching with pendulous branchlets. Remember, you'll also need to balance privacy with the need to let light into rooms at the front of the house, especially in winter. A deciduous tree provides a naked framework in winter when light levels are low, and if you choose one with simple and small or finely pinnate leaves it will also allow light to gently percolate through the canopy into your home during summer.

At the front of the house you'll also need to consider overhead utilities, such as telephone cables. In most cases trees with a height of around six to 12 metres won't get in the way of these, and won't block out too much light from first-floor windows. Underground utilities shouldn't pose a problem as they are normally buried relatively deep and most root systems are relatively shallow without tap roots. However, you should bear in mind that some newer ▷



GAP PHOTOS/JERRY HARPUR

THE GARDEN COLLECTION/FLORA PRESS/DEREK ST. ROMAINE

ANDREW BUTLER / GETTY IMAGES

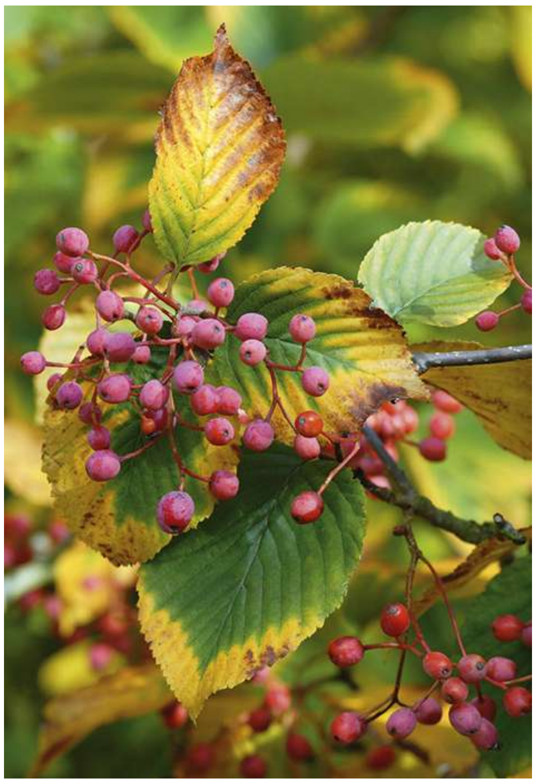
Styrax obassia

I love this small-to-medium-sized tree, especially when it flowers in early summer. With sufficient space and shelter, and with some light shade and rich soil, it will grow to eight metres and produce a broad but even, oval-shaped crown. Originally from Japan, it has a smooth grey-barked trunk and attractive oval leaves, but the real horticultural highlight of this tree is the mass of highly fragrant, bell-shaped, white flowers that appear in late spring and hang in long chains through the rounded, plate-like leaves. The flowers are highly attractive to bees and are followed by a chain of hard, round fruits. **H** 8m. **S** 4-8m. USDA 6b.

▷ utilities, such as cables for broadband and cable TV, may be closer to the surface.

All trees require a strong root plate to support the trunk and canopy, and as a general rule, the taller and broader the tree, the larger and wider the root system needed to support the crown. In a small front garden, the space for root development will often be limited and what space there is may include paved surfaces that can be easily disturbed by vigorous, adventurous lateral roots searching for water and nutrients and, of course, anchorage. One other factor many people worry about when planting a tree close to a house is the risk of subsidence to the building's foundations. Provided you select a small tree, with a non-aggressive root system, such as those featured here, and allow at least three metres between the tree and your home, this shouldn't be a problem. However, I would always advise buying a tree from a reputable, specialist nursery that will be able to advise you on suitable planting distances.

You also need to be aware that you are responsible for any damage caused by a tree grown on your property, so you should ensure your tree is a safe distance from any neighbouring properties too. And while there are no specific planning regulations governing trees in gardens,



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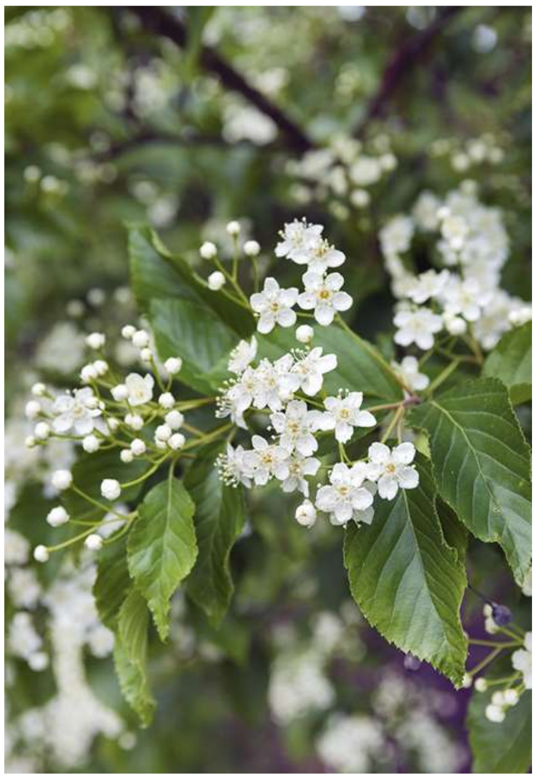

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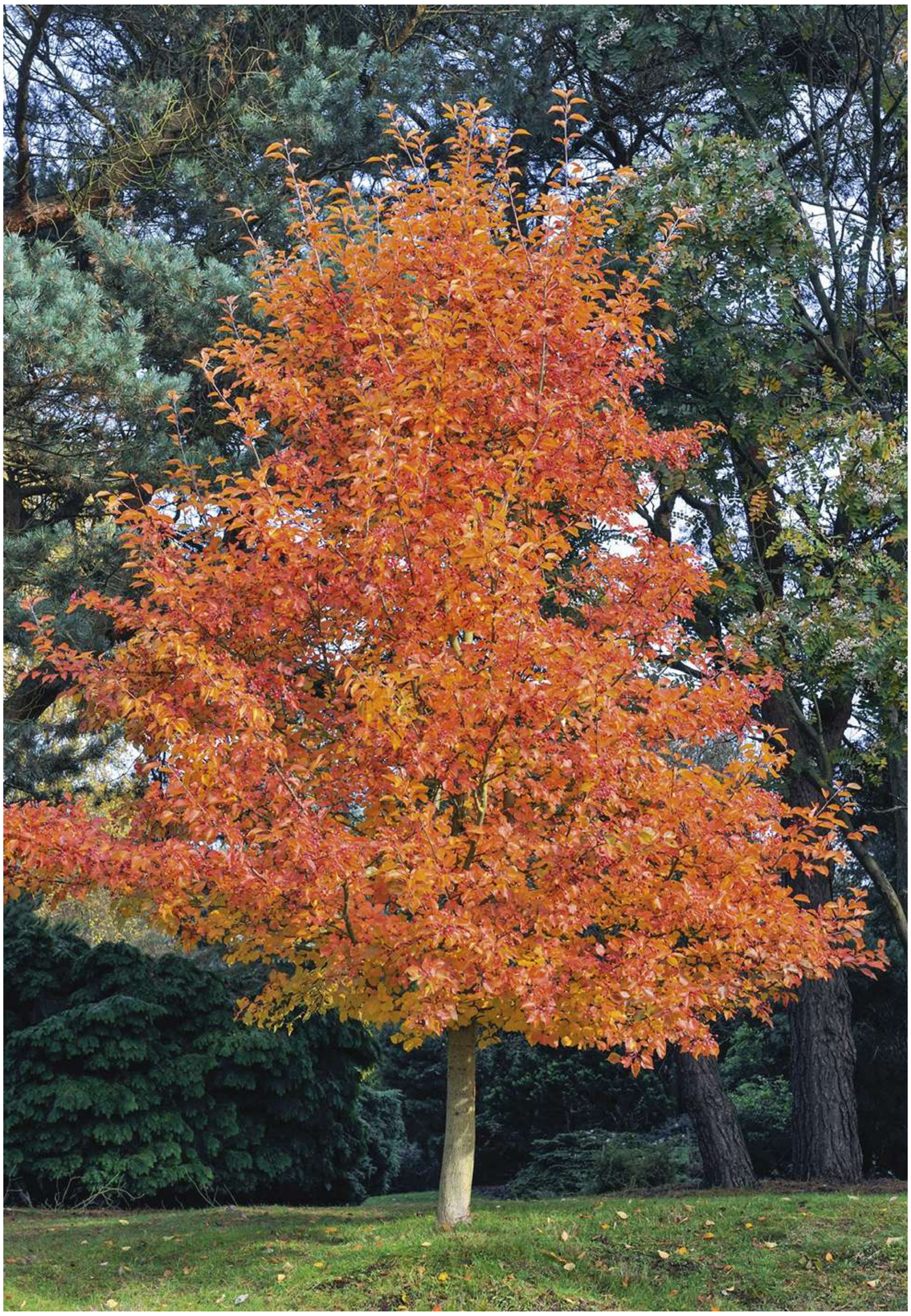


GAP PHOTOS/J S SIRA

Sorbus alnifolia

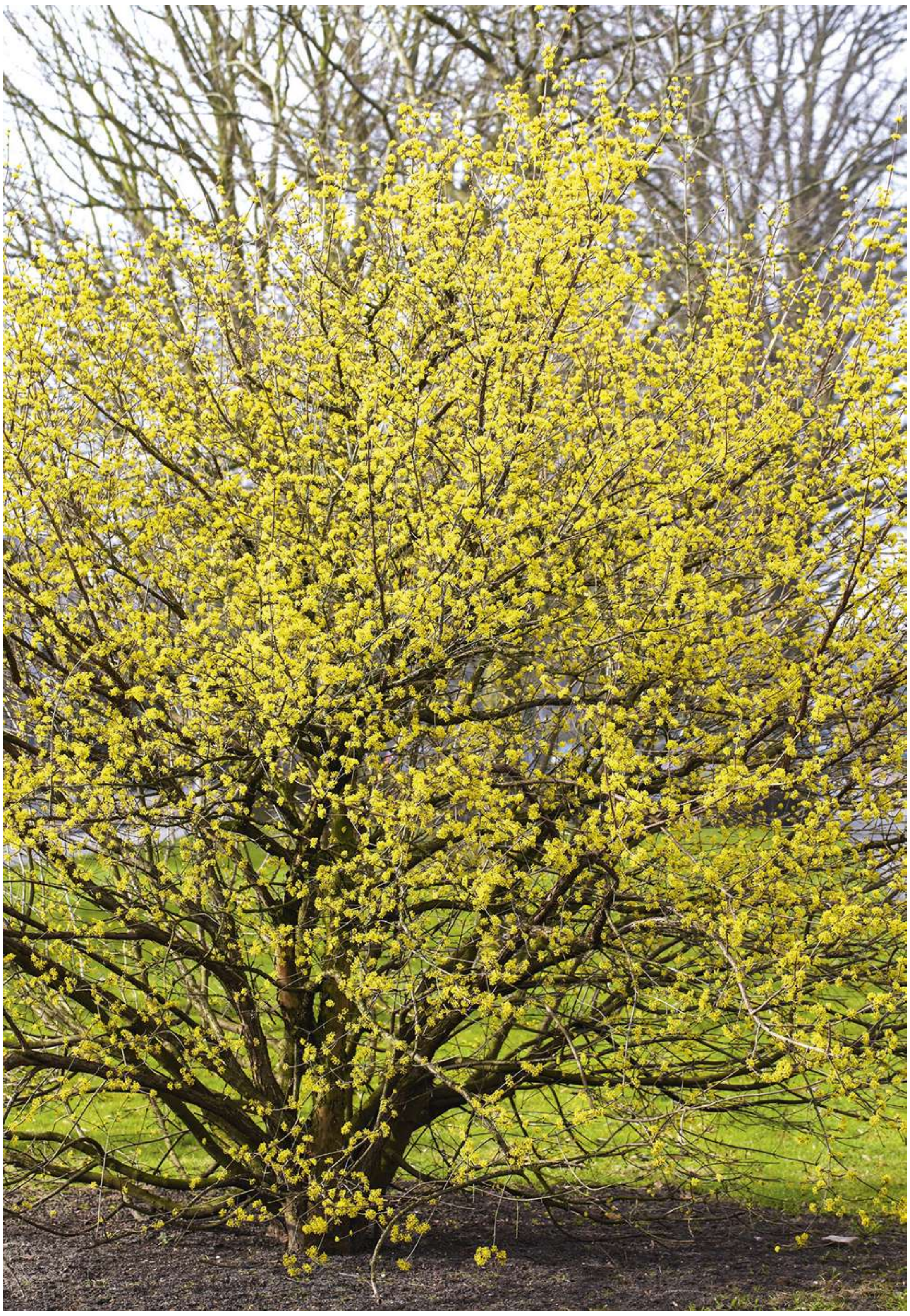
I collected seed from this tree in South Korea in 1989 and it is now growing well in the arboretum at Kew, making an upright tree with a pyramidal-shaped crown. In time the canopy becomes wider and spreading, while the main branching still retains an upright habit. It has small leaves with heavily pronounced veins that are the backdrop for the delicate white flowers. The leaves turn a golden yellow in autumn when the clusters of bright-red fruits are seen, remaining on the tree long after the leaves have fallen. There is a good form called 'Skyline' which has a more upright, columnar habit. **H** 10m. **S** 8m. USDA 5a.

planting one is a serious long-term investment so if you rent or don't own the freehold, you should certainly check the terms of your lease.

Bearing all of the above in mind, it is the ornamental attributes of a tree that will no doubt sway your final choice. If you're only going to plant one small tree, then you want it to be one that will offer you plenty of 'bang for your buck'; a tree that provides something to enjoy throughout the year, not just one flush of flowers for a single week. Ideally, you want a tree with small, fine, attractive leaves that won't block gutters or drains, and which are also possibly golden or variegated or shiny or have additional autumnal tints. Both flowers and fruit add even further interest, but if you also want to avoid the problems caused by my flowering crab apple tree, I'd suggest you choose flowers with small petals and dry fruits in the form of capsules, pods or samaras instead of wet, sticky drupes that can get messy and stain the paving and carpets.

No tree will be able to tick all the boxes, however, with so many beautiful trees available you should be able to find one you love that your neighbours might become smitten by too.

• Tony's recommendations for trees for front gardens continue over the page. ▷



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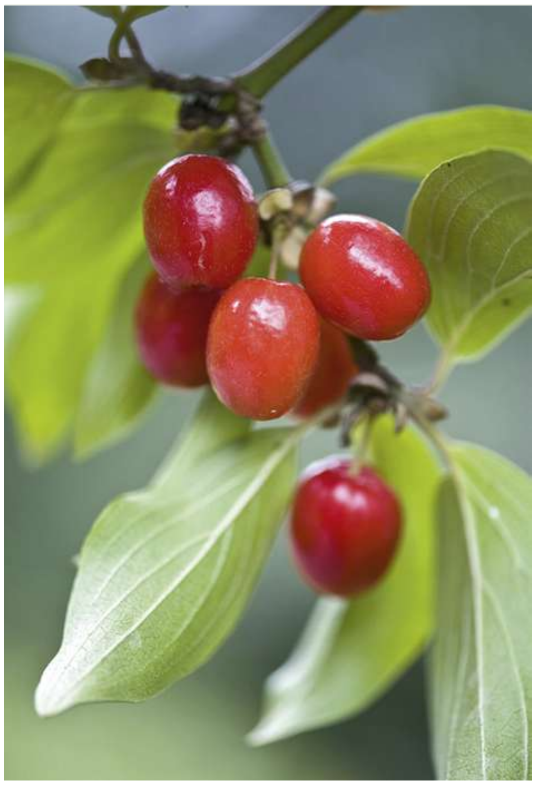

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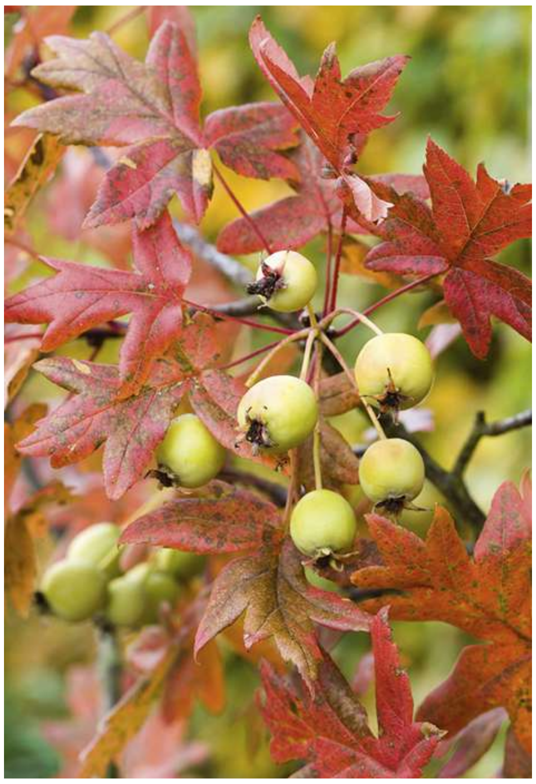
Cornus mas

The misleadingly named Cornelian cherry, is actually a dogwood from central and southern Europe. Its unusual golden-yellow flowers are produced in small clusters over the entire tree in early spring before the foliage appears. The flowers are followed by small, cherry-like fruits that are edible but very sour so best used for making jam. It can be grown as a standard tree on a single, straight trunk which shows off the flaking, grey-brown bark and tight branching habit, or as a large bushy shrub (above) with branches from ground level. The cultivar 'Hillier's Upright' has a more broadly upright crown, ideal for small spaces. **H** 2-4m. **S** 2-4m. RHS H6, USDA 5a.

More choices

Further ideas for trees suitable for average-sized front garden.

- ***Acer davidii*** Also known as the Chinese snake bark maple. This is relatively tall with a round crown. 12m. USDA 6a-9b.
- ***Acer rufinerve*** Attractive snakebark maple with bluish-grey bark, broadly oval leaves and a wide, vase-shaped crown. 12m. USDA 5a-8b.
- ***Alnus incana* 'Aurea'** Sometimes known as the golden alder, this has an upright crown and golden foliage. 8m. AGM*. RHS H6,
- ***Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Robin Hill'** Has a dense upright crown and white flowers in early summer. 6m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
- ***Betula nigra* 'Cully'** Standard tree with peeling bark and a pyramidal crown for the slightly larger garden. 15m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.
- ***Magnolia kobus*** The Kobushi magnolia has fragrant flowers and colourful fruit with a pyramidal crown. 12m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.
- ***Parrotia persica* 'Vanessa'** A fine Persian ironwood with an upright form. 10m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
- ***Syringa reticulata* 'Ivory Silk'** A Japanese tree lilac with a beautifully lenticelled trunk and panicles of cream flowers. 10m. USDA 3b-7a.



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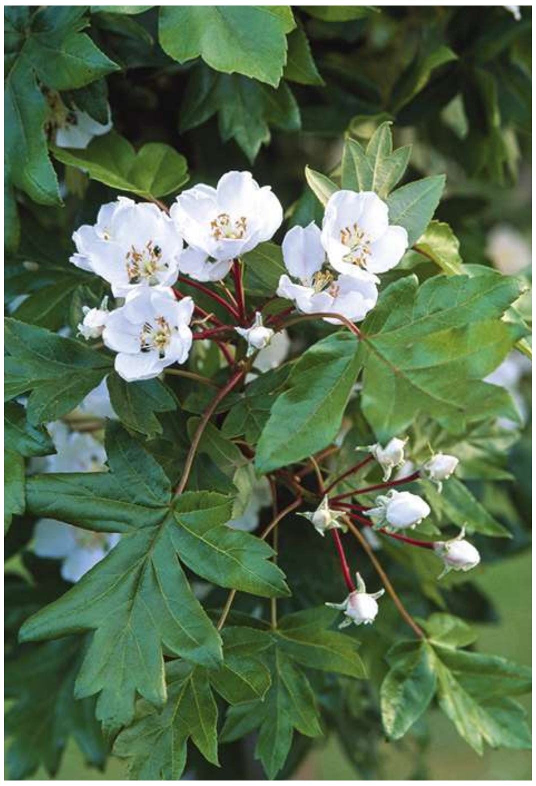

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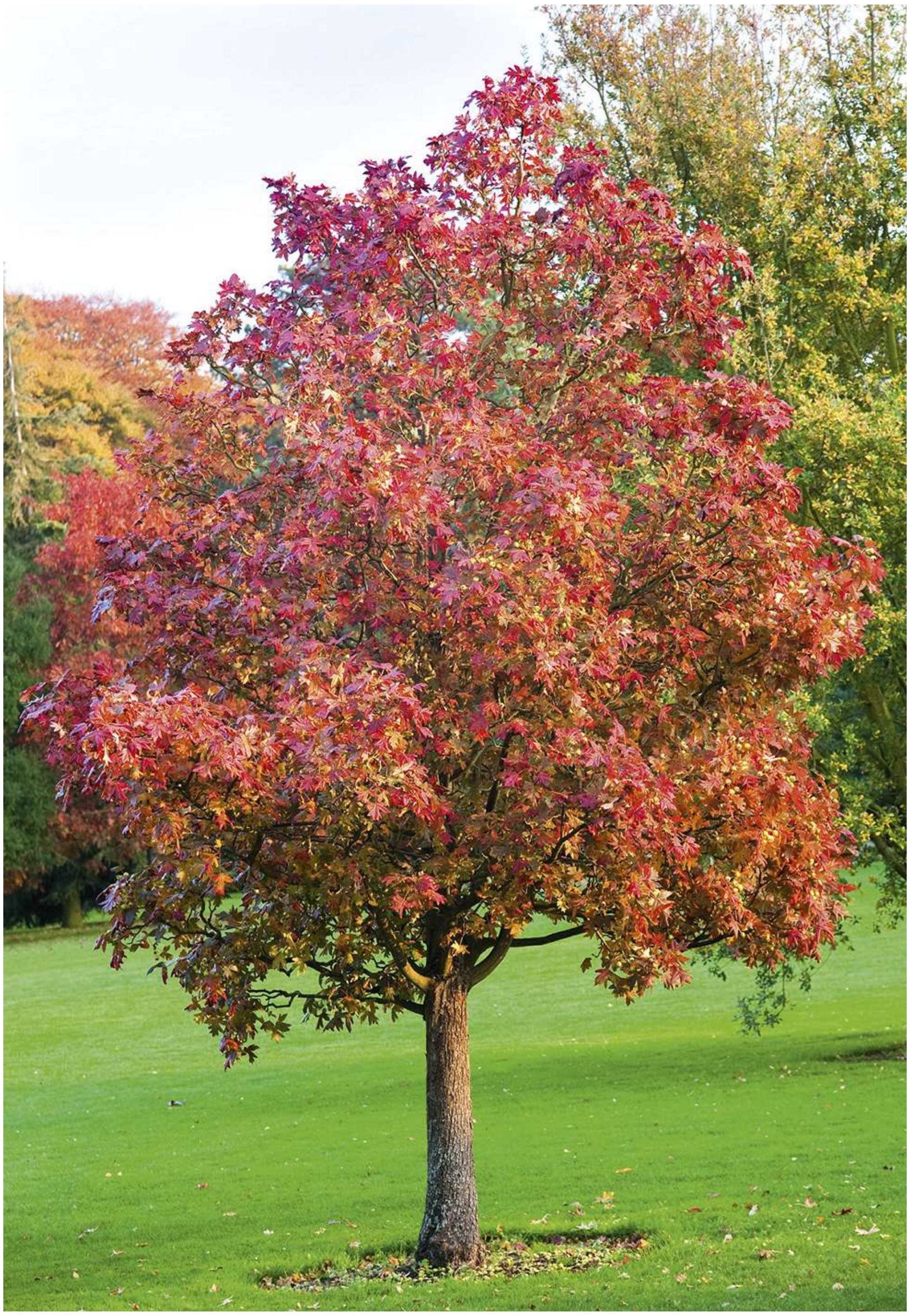


GAP PHOTOS/HOWARD RICE - CAMBRIDGE BOTANIC GARDENS

Malus trilobata

This crab apple, which originates in countries of the southeastern Mediterranean, is one I would love to see planted more often in gardens, because the overall size and shape of the canopy. With a rocket-like pyramidal habit and erect branching reaching 6 to 8 metres high when mature, it is perfect for the front garden. The lobed leaves are relatively small and green, turning a rich, deep red in autumn. In early summer, the flowers are large and cream but the tree needs some summer heat to develop into the small yellow-red fruits which remain on the tree until after the leaves have fallen. **H** 6-8m. **S** 2.5m. USDA 6.

Where to see

- **Exbury Gardens** The Estate Office, Exbury, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1AZ. Tel 023 8089 1203, exbury.co.uk
- **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew** Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB. Tel 020 8332 5655, kew.org
- **Valley Gardens** The Great Park, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2HT. Tel 01753 860222, theroyallandscape.co.uk/gardens-and-landscape/the-valley-gardens
- **The Yorkshire Arboretum** Castle Howard, York, North Yorkshire YO60 7BY. Tel 01653 648598, yorkshirearboretum.org

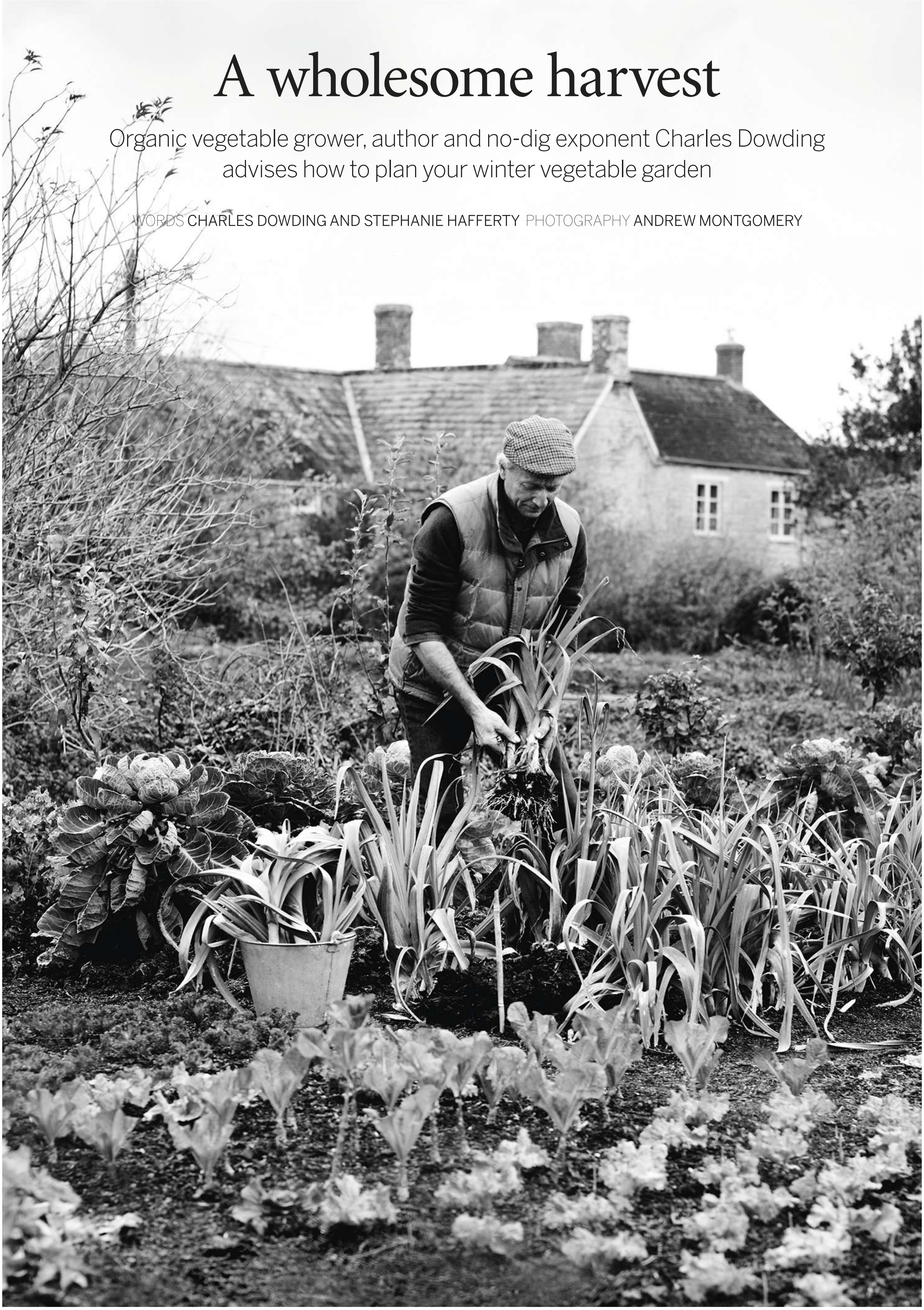
Where to buy

- **Barcham Trees** Tel 01353 720 950, barcham.co.uk
- **Bluebell Nursery** Tel 01530 413 700, bluebellnursery.com
- **Burncoose Nurseries** Tel 01209 860316, burncoose.co.uk
- **Deepdale Trees** Tel 0176 7262636, deepdale-trees.co.uk
- **Hillier Garden Centres** Tel 01794 368407, hillieronline.co.uk
- **Majestic Trees** Tel 01582 843881, majestictrees.co.uk
- **Mallet Court Nursery** Tel 01823 481493, malletcourt.co.uk
- **Tendercare** Tel 01895 835544, tendercare.co.uk
- **Thornhayes Nursery** Tel 01884 266746, thornhayes-nursery.co.uk

A wholesome harvest

Organic vegetable grower, author and no-dig exponent Charles Dowding advises how to plan your winter vegetable garden

WORDS CHARLES DOWDING AND STEPHANIE HAFFERTY PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREW MONTGOMERY



Winter squash. Sow mid April undercover, plant by the end of May and harvest from mid September once fruits are full colour and have hard skins. Best success in cooler areas is with 'Uchiki Kuri', a tasty red squash of 750g-1kg average.

Left Charles Dowding in his intensively cropped, quarter-acre organic vegetable garden in Somerset. He supplies local restaurants and vegetable boxes, and teaches day and weekend courses at his garden.

“Growing seedlings in a greenhouse gains time, often a whole month’s growth”

Throughout winter in my garden in Somerset, I pick Brussels sprouts, kale, leek, swede and parsnip, and in mild weather there are leaves of land cress, mustards, salad rocket and spinach. I work on a quarter acre of undug, surface-composted beds and sell freshly harvested salad leaves and vegetables to local shops and restaurants all year round, and also use the garden for teaching courses. To get the most from my plot, I need to plan carefully and now is the best time to work out what and when to crop.

Vegetables are hungry plants so it’s important to keep your soil fertile. Weed your plot thoroughly (or mulch with cardboard if weeds are thick), then feed your soil by spreading a 3-5cm layer of well-composted organic matter on the surface. This improves the nutrient levels and soil structure as well as encouraging earthworms and other beneficial soil life. After winter frosts your soil should have a friable tilth good for plantings and be capable of slowly releasing nutrients through the year. Early weeding is key: on a dry afternoon in March scuff the surface lightly with a rake to kill weed seedlings. Repeat in April and you’ll be well on the way to creating weed-free beds, with undisturbed and well-structured soil below. When replanting in summer, all you need to do is clear away the old crop and pop in the new seeds and plants.

Most winter-cropping vegetables need longer to grow than summer harvesting ones, and some need sowing at precise times to enable them to mature in the autumn while the soil is still warm. Aim to keep sowing and planting through summer to extend your harvest into winter.

When planning winter crops, check what grows best in your climate. Then, according to the speed of growth, assign each vegetable to one of three categories. The first category should include vegetables requiring a whole growing season to mature (such as Brussels sprouts, cabbage for hearts, winter squash, celeriac and parsnip; the first three need plenty of space). The second category includes vegetables that need only half a season to grow. This category should be subdivided into those that grow best in the first half of the year (such as garlic, onions, broad beans, shallots and second-early potatoes) and those that grow best in the second half (including swede, turnip, chard, chicories, endive, kale, leek, purple sprouting broccoli and salad leaves). Obviously, before planting those that grow in the second half of the season, the ground can be used for the first-half season vegetables, as well as any quick-maturing crops. A few half-season vegetables (such as beetroot, carrot and spinach) grow well in either half of the year. The third category should include winter-harvested perennial vegetables, such as Taunton Deane and Daubenton’s kales, Welsh onion, skirret and sorrel. They require a clear decision on where to plant in the garden, separate from annual vegetables.

Now make a rough plan of the vegetables in the second category, putting brackets around any veg that grow best in the first half of the year. Beside them you can write any vegetables that grow in the second half, to plant in summer after clearing the first harvest. For example: (potatoes) kale, (peas) beetroot, (spinach) leek, (onions) chicories, (broad beans) spinach, and (beetroot) coriander. This helps with timing and keeping beds full. However, plans are just a starting point and are likely to change because of weather, failed sowings and pests; be prepared to fill unexpected gaps with new plants, hence it’s wise to grow a few extra.

The only vegetables I sow directly into the soil are carrot, parsnip and corn salad. Growing seedlings in a greenhouse gains time, often a whole month’s growth. It’s good to sow seed while summer harvests are beginning to ripen, and you can even interplant in July between maturing shallots or onions. After lifting your onions in early August, you can plant July-sown chard, chicories for radicchio hearts, herbs such as coriander and chervil, kale and many salads.

By early October the garden can be fuller than at any other time of year, and you will have already stored many vegetables to enjoy over the coming winter. I still find it remarkable that the garden produces these precious winter harvests, and I wish you every success in growing them.

Favourite winter crops

1 Beetroot A reliable staple. Sow four seeds in 3-4cm modules, to plant within a month of sowing as clumps of three to five seedlings, 30cm apart.

2 Brussels sprouts Hardy but may need netting against birds. Sow from April to mid May, preferably under fine mesh to avoid flea beetle. Plant out by mid-June, spacing 60cm apart in rows 75cm apart.

3 Celeriac Difficult but worth attempting in heavy, damper soils. Sow in March and prick into modules for planting 35cm apart in mid May. Harvest in November.

4 Chicories For hearts by November, sow red radicchios (‘Palla Rossa’) and ‘Sugarloaf’ in late June to early July, for planting after potato and onion harvest. Sow ‘Witloof’ in May for roots to dig out and pot on in November, for forcing sweet chicons in a dark cupboard. Plant seedlings 30cm apart.

5 Mustards and salad rocket Sow direct or three seeds per module, space closer for baby leaves, wider for large ones (15cm apart). Sow August for harvests from mid September onwards: they survive frost but produce less in winter.

6 Parsnip Sow direct in March to May, 5cm apart, in rows 35cm apart. Keep seedbed moist and thin seedlings where necessary. Harvest during winter as required. Roots go down well in undug, heavy soil with compost on top.

7 Purple sprouting broccoli These form large plants but can be sown as late as June. Choose a variety to mature from late winter to mid spring, according to preference. Plant 60cm apart.

8 Kale Perennial varieties are easy to grow and productive. Otherwise, sow annuals such as ‘Red Russian’, ‘Cavolo Nero’, ‘Hungry Gap’ or ‘Thousand Head’ in June to plant in July. Plant perennial kale 75cm apart and annuals 45cm apart.

9 Leek You can grow shallow-planted leeks from multi-sown modules, three in a clump, or larger ones from individual plants, all sown early April and planted by end of June. Grow ‘Bandit’, ‘Husky’ and ‘Apollo’ for winter hardiness and harvest from January to April.

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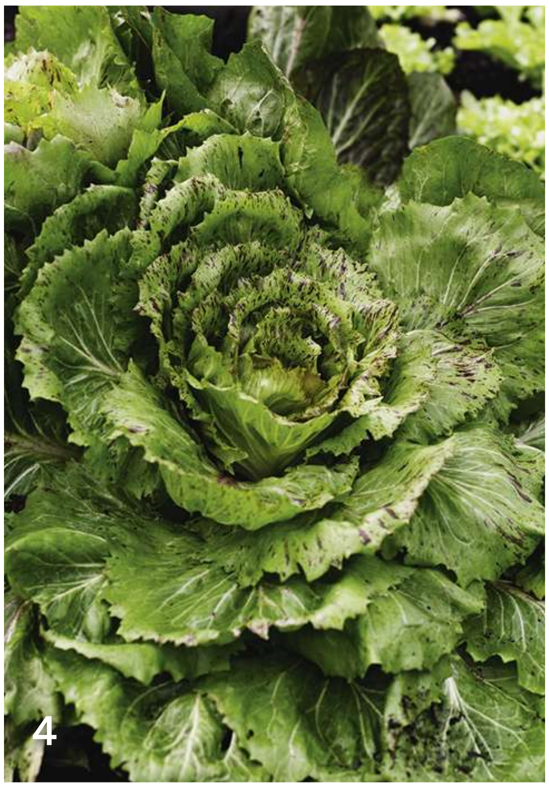
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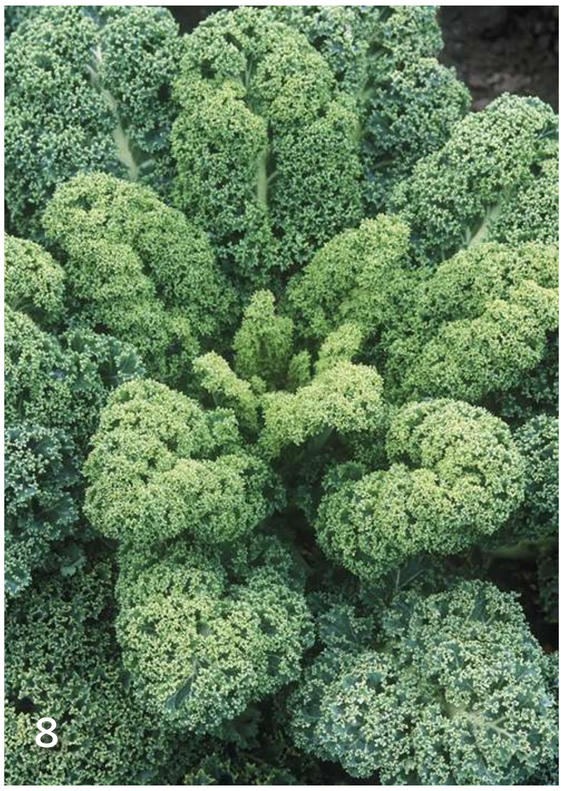
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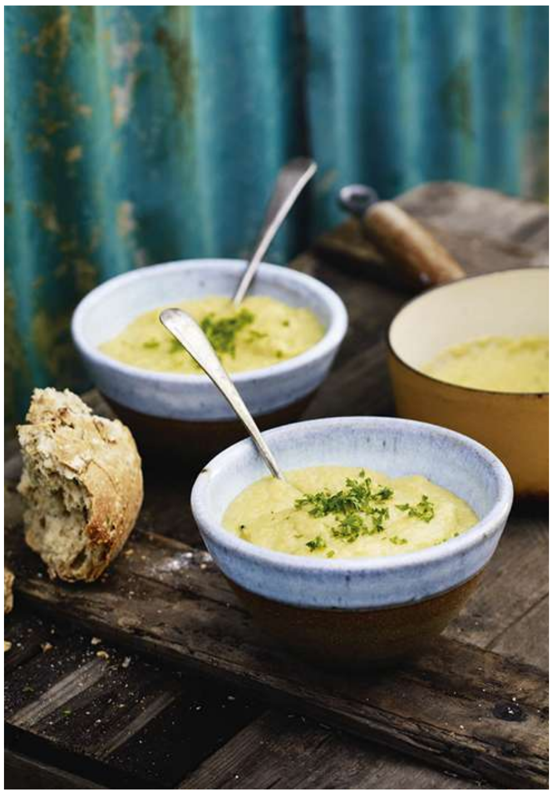
2 JOHN GLOVER / GAP PHOTOS; 7 & 8 HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS



Golden beetroot soup

SERVES 4

- **1kg golden beetroot, peeled and diced into 2cm chunks. Finely chop any leaves**
- **3 onions, chopped**
- **500g carrots, diced (about 2cm)**
- **3 cloves garlic, minced**
- **1 good-sized leek, sliced**
- **2tbsp finely chopped root ginger**
- **1 litre vegetable stock**
- **Vegetable oil (olive, rapeseed or sunflower)**
- **Salt and pepper to taste**
- **Optional – chopped parsley, paprika, lemon juice**

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Place the beetroot and carrots in a roasting tin and drizzle with oil. Roast in the middle of the oven for 20-30 minutes until soft – test with a sharp pointed knife or cake tester.

Meanwhile, put a tablespoon of oil in a large pan and sauté the onions and leeks. Add the garlic, root ginger and beetroot leaves (if you have them). Put aside when cooked.

Remove the roasted vegetables from the oven and add, alongside the onion mixture, to a pan of hot stock. Season to taste and simmer for about 15 minutes. Allow to cool for a few minutes, add lemon juice if desired and whizz with a handheld blender.

Taste, season and serve with chopped parsley or a sprinkle of paprika.

Winter greens and vegetable stir fry

SERVES 4-6

- **8-12 handfuls of leaves – chard (including stalks), spinach, pak choi, cabbage, kale or mixture of several, shredded**
- **2 onions, sliced**
- **1 leek, sliced**
- **1 carrot, peeled and grated**
- **½ celeriac, peeled and grated**
- **1 parsnip, peeled and grated**
- **2 cloves garlic**
- **1 chilli, chopped**
- **2cm root ginger**
- **1tbsp Tamari soy sauce, to season**
- **2tsp sesame or sunflower oil**

You can use any leaves for this recipe, or a mixture, depending on whatever you have in the garden and kitchen, which makes it a great way of using up holed or large leaves. You can vary amounts but you'll need two good handfuls of leaves and root vegetables per person. Chop the leaves and prepare the vegetables and put to one side. Mince the garlic, chilli and root ginger. You can use a potato ricer or garlic press or chop finely and crush with a knife. Heat the oil in a wok and add the leek and onions, fry until soft. Add the ginger, garlic and chilli and stir. Add the root vegetables, stir for a few minutes then add the leaves. Add Tamari or other soy sauce, to taste. Keep stirring until the leaves are cooked. Serve with rice or noodles.

Spiced parsnip and apple muffins

SERVES 12

- **225g self-raising flour (I use wholemeal)**
- **100g light soft brown sugar**
- **2 large eggs, beaten**
- **150g butter, melted and allowed to cool**
- **2 apples, grated (I leave the peel on)**
- **2 medium parsnips, peeled and grated**
- **125g sultanas**
- **75g walnuts, chopped**
- **1tsp ground cinnamon**
- **1tsp mixed spice**

Preheat oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Line a muffin tin with paper cases or grease it if you are not using cases.

In a large bowl, mix together the spices, sugar and flour. In a separate bowl, mix the melted butter, eggs, parsnip and apple. Add the walnuts and sultanas, stirring carefully.

Pour this into the bowl of dry ingredients, fold together until everything is just mixed – be careful not to over-stir the mixture.

Share between the 12 muffin cases and bake for 12 minutes or so.

Find more recipes at **stephaniehafferty.co.uk** and to discover more about Charles's gardening methods and upcoming events and courses, visit **charlesdowding.co.uk**

Rich winter stew with seasonal vegetables

SERVES 4-6

- 1 medium celeriac, grated
- 2 medium or 1 large parsnip, diced
- 3 onions, sliced
- 2 good-sized leeks
- 6 carrots
- 1 bunch of chard
- ½ medium white cabbage (red is delicious too)
- 1 red chilli, as hot as you like
- ½ medium squash, peeled and diced (I use 'Uchiki Kuri')
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 teacups dried beans, rehydrated
- 1tbsp vegetable oil
- Vegetable stock (or boiling water), adjust quantities as necessary
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Chopped parsley

Chop and slice the vegetables. Sauté the onions and leeks in the oil until soft. Add the rest of the vegetables and beans with as much water or stock as you need.

Simmer for 30 to 40 minutes, stirring occasionally and adding more liquid if necessary during the cooking until the beans are soft. Taste, season accordingly and serve with chopped parsley.

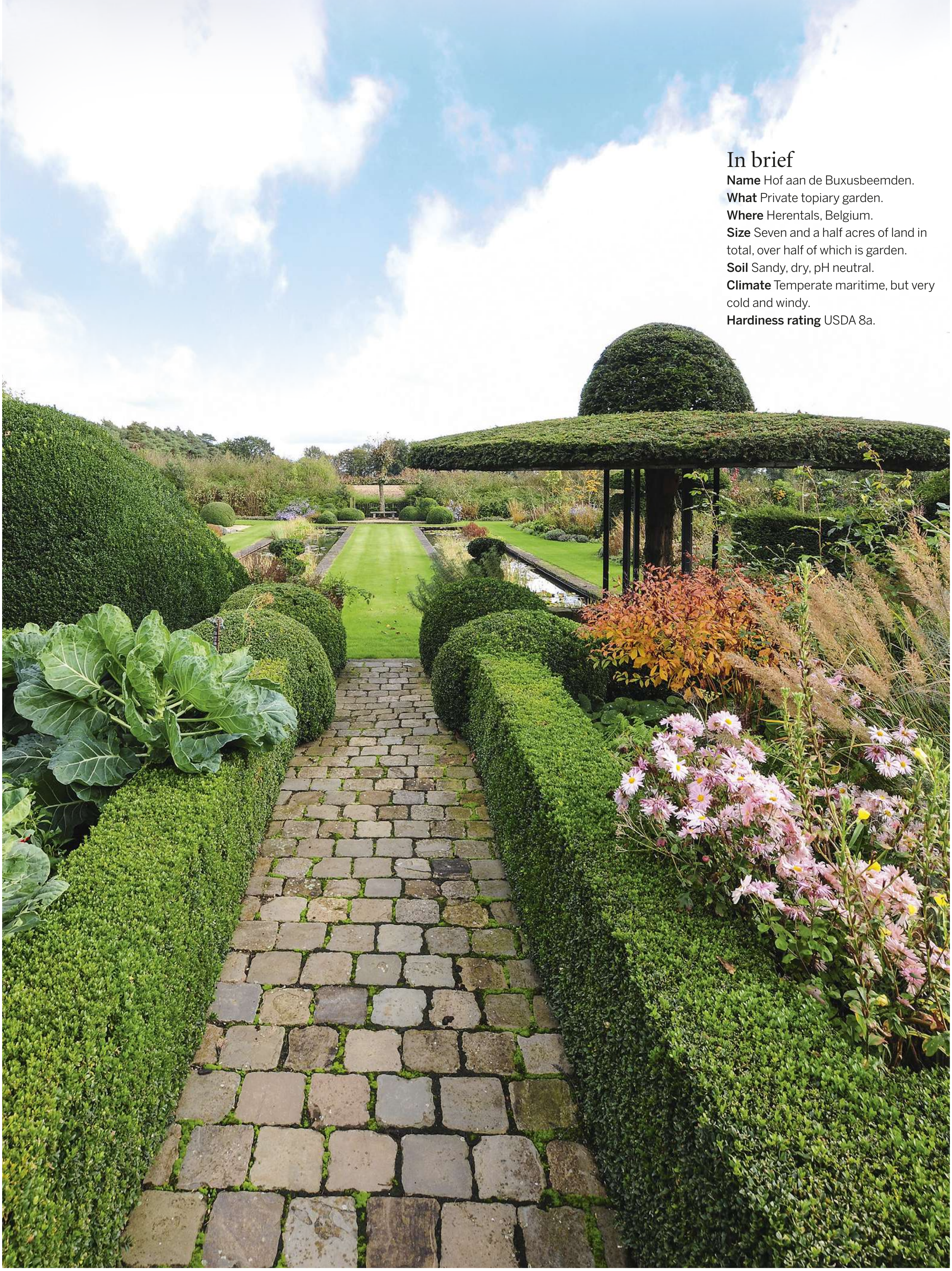
Playing with space

Francis Denayer and Ann van Gestel not only designed a beautiful topiary garden, they also created their own landscape as a backdrop

WORDS **INA SPERL** PHOTOGRAPHY **SIETSKE DE VRIES**

At the edge of the lawn a series of large topiary yews stand tall, marking the edge of the lawn and the start of the meadow.

Right An umbrella-shaped yew tree dominates this border of pink chrysanthemum, *Stipa brachytricha* and *Gillenia trifoliata* with its colourful red foliage.



In brief

Name Hof aan de Buxusbeemden.
What Private topiary garden.
Where Herentals, Belgium.
Size Seven and a half acres of land in total, over half of which is garden.
Soil Sandy, dry, pH neutral.
Climate Temperate maritime, but very cold and windy.
Hardiness rating USDA 8a.

The large lawn to the rear of the house is encircled by a curve of box cushions.

Standing on the terrace in front of the house, it is hard to decide which part of Francis and Ann's garden you should explore first. Should you go straight ahead, where a central axis of the garden stretches towards the horizon, or left, where two long, rectangular ponds lead to an opening in the hedge giving a glimpse of the surrounding fields? Both choices are tempting.

Those two axes form the backbones of this impressive garden near Antwerp. It is a very structured design, with topiary playing a leading role. Low box hedges frame perennial borders, while tall beech hedges give shelter. In one border a large, umbrella-shaped yew catches the eye. Elsewhere, soft, curving cushions of box encircle a lawn and, in the distance, four large topiary pieces sit where the garden merges with the meadow and trees beyond. "They are the guards of the landscape," says Francis. They bring to mind Great Dixter, and one of them is indeed inspired by Christopher Lloyd's topiary. But even with some English influence, this is unmistakably a Flemish garden.

Hedges are a typical feature of Flanders, pruned so sharply in many front gardens that they resemble walls, and leading Belgian landscape designer Jacques Wirtz is known for his playful designs with hedges. It was never in doubt that Francis, a garden designer and teacher, would follow Flemish tradition, however, he has given it his own, individual touch in the generous garden he and his wife have created over the past 15 years. This is a garden that continues to look good in winter, with its strong frame of evergreen plants. In autumn, the winged spindle tree (*Euonymus alatus*), scarlet oak

Continued on page 78 ▷

Francis's tips on creating a garden

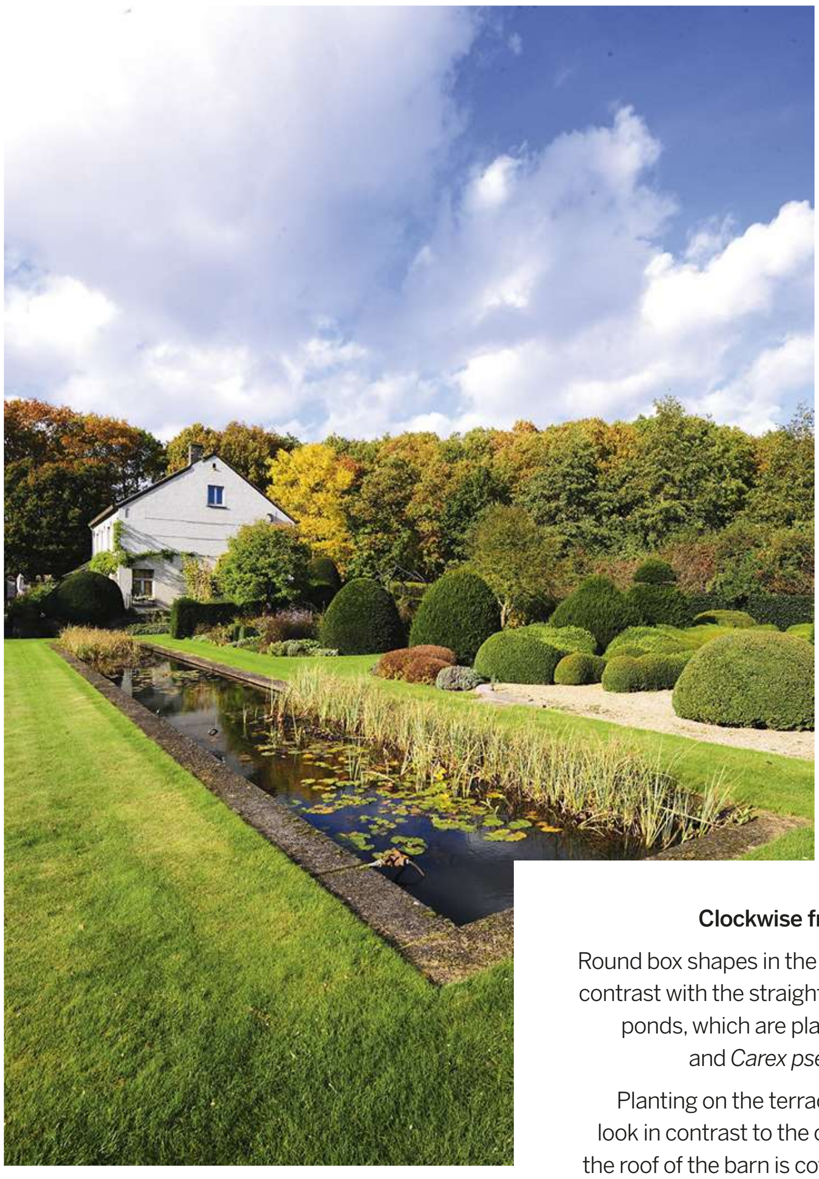
1 Always make the garden manageable. We were prepared for a lot of work when we started here, but when I design a garden I also think about the future. It has to be easy to simplify the design in order to reduce the amount of work in the garden as you get older.

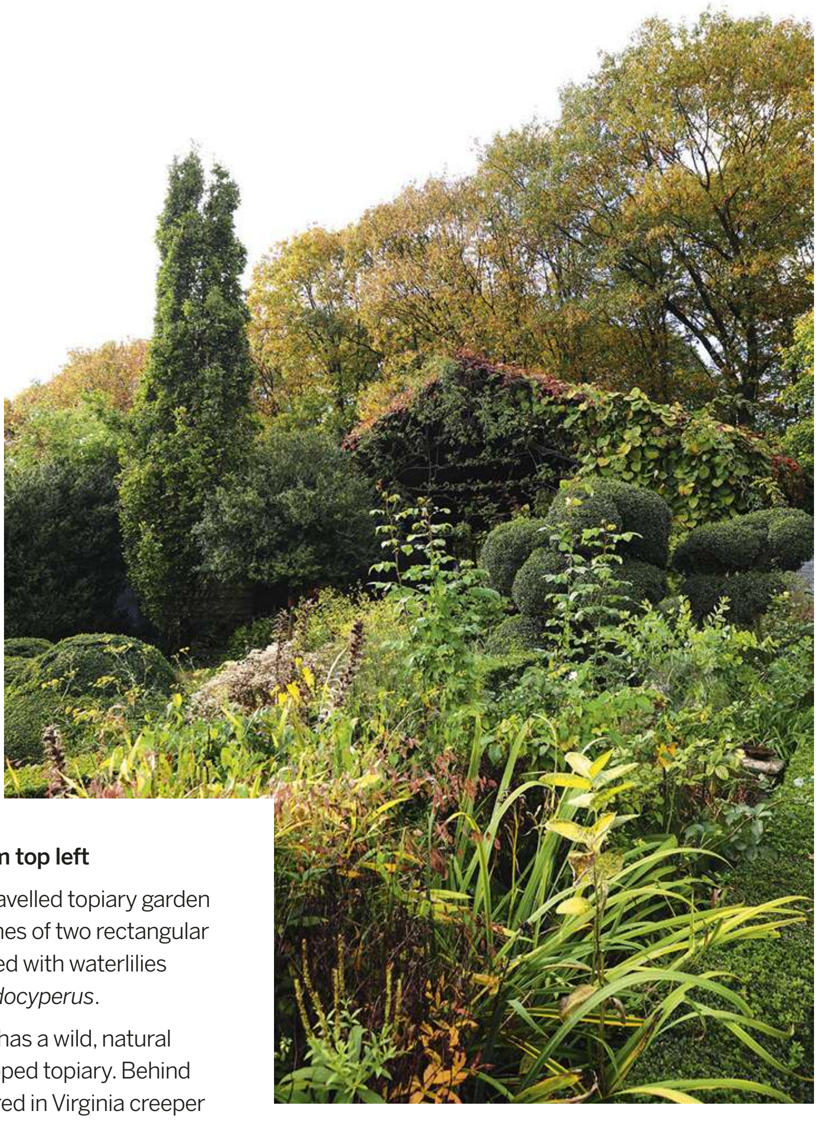
2 Listen to nature, listen to the plants. They tell you what is right and wrong. I cannot grow ligularias here because they need moist soil, the same with astrantias. Hydrangeas do not grow here either because it is far too cold and windy.

3 Resist the temptation to collect plants. Simply acquiring random plants doesn't necessarily make for a well-designed garden. Before you buy any plants, you should be sure you know where you want to put them.

4 Sometimes you have to alter your design a little. We designed an extension of the main axis though the meadow behind the garden in the form of a broad, mowed path, but it just didn't look right. We let the meadow grow back again, and now it looks much better.

5 If something goes wrong, accept this is part of gardening. The garden is part of nature and not everything is under your control. Most of the marguerites in our meadow vanished two years ago. We are trying to find out what they need in order to encourage them to come back.





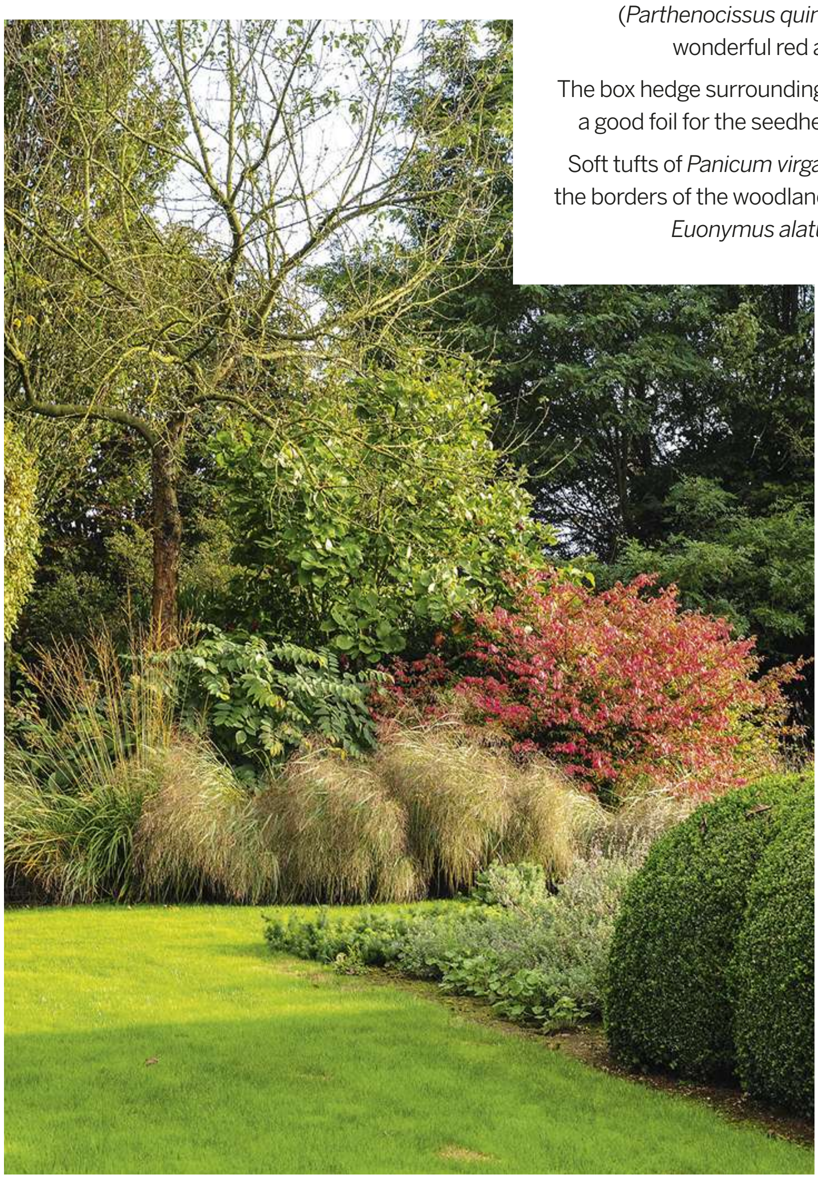
Clockwise from top left

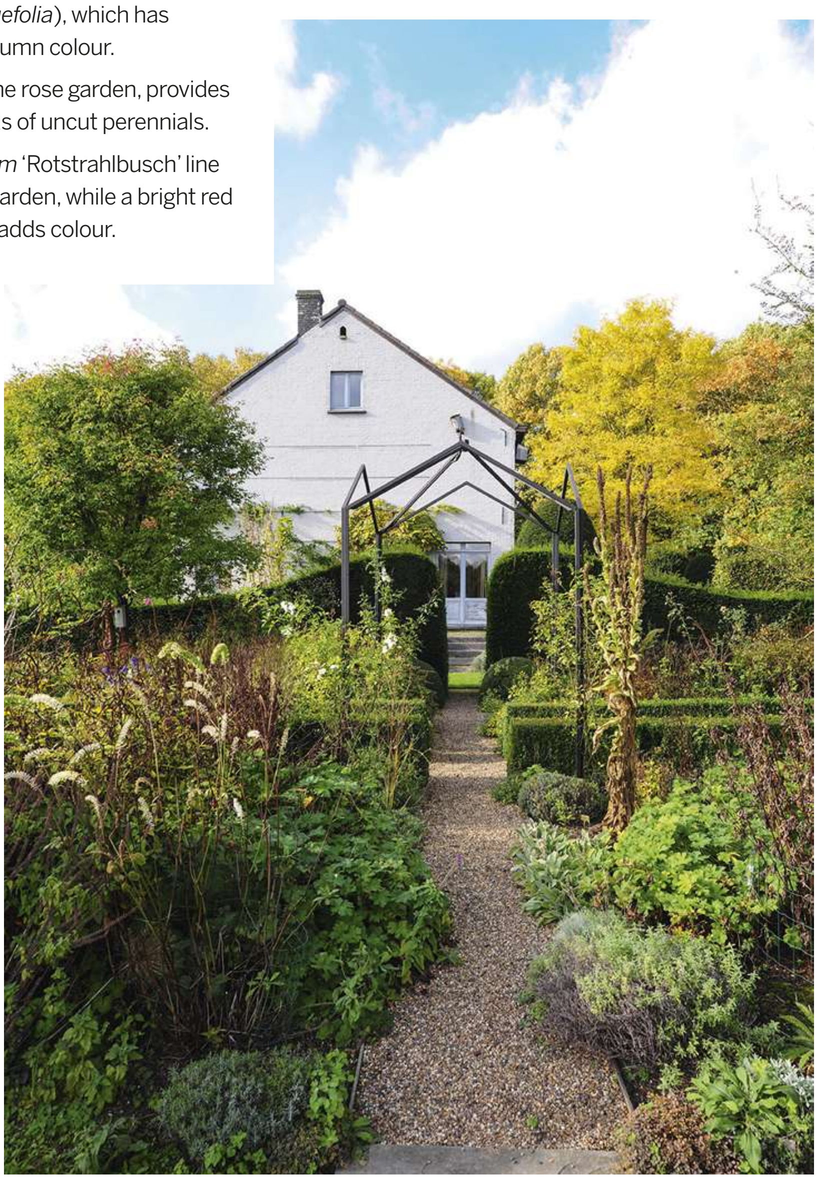
Round box shapes in the gravelled topiary garden contrast with the straight lines of two rectangular ponds, which are planted with waterlilies and *Carex pseudocyperus*.

Planting on the terrace has a wild, natural look in contrast to the clipped topiary. Behind the roof of the barn is covered in Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), which has wonderful red autumn colour.

The box hedge surrounding the rose garden, provides a good foil for the seedheads of uncut perennials.

Soft tufts of *Panicum virgatum* 'Rotstrahlbusch' line the borders of the woodland garden, while a bright red *Euonymus alatus* adds colour.





Francis's topiary tips

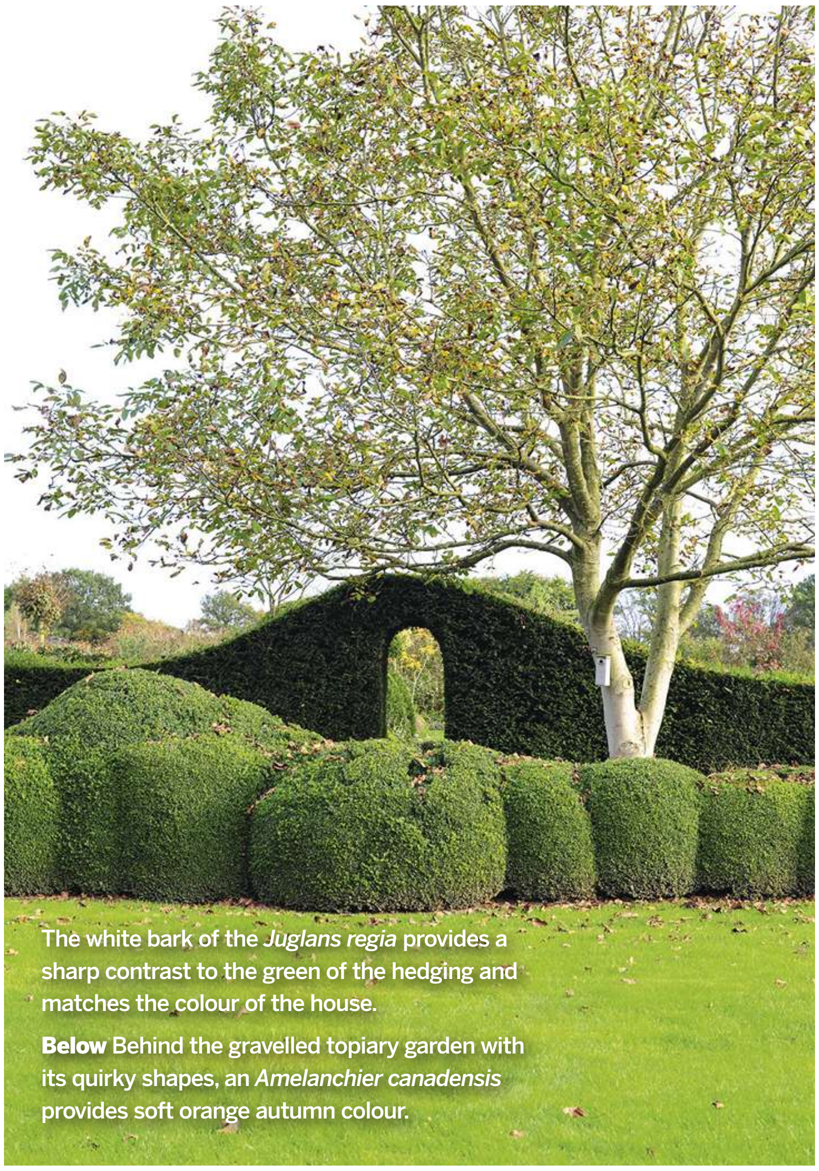
1 Always choose the right plant for a topiary. You need a plant with one straight stem, not one that branches out.

2 Choose a plant of the desired height and then prune it – a young plant will take far too long to grow. When you want a large topiary, choose yew or beech.

3 The topiary form is hidden in the plant, you just have to see it. The plant tells you what to do, where to cut.

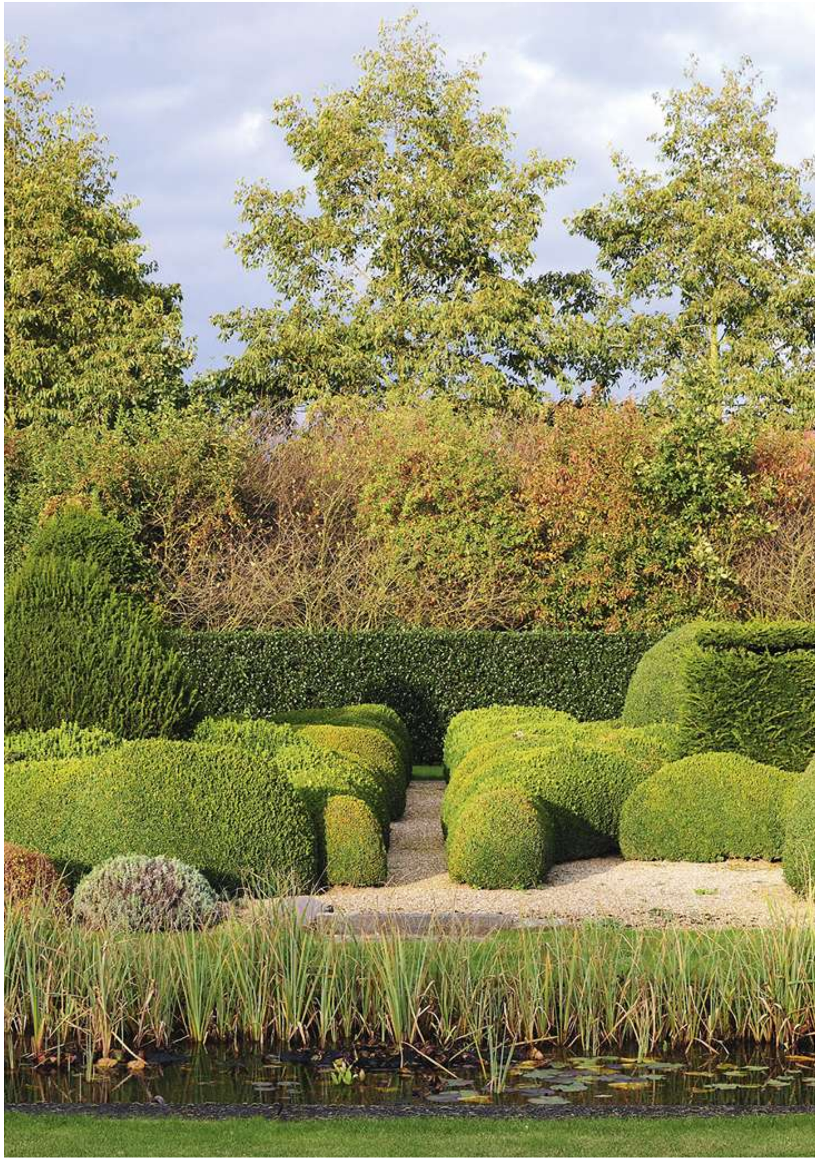
4 Keep in mind that topiary is an important feature in winter, so you might want to use an evergreen plant, such as yew.

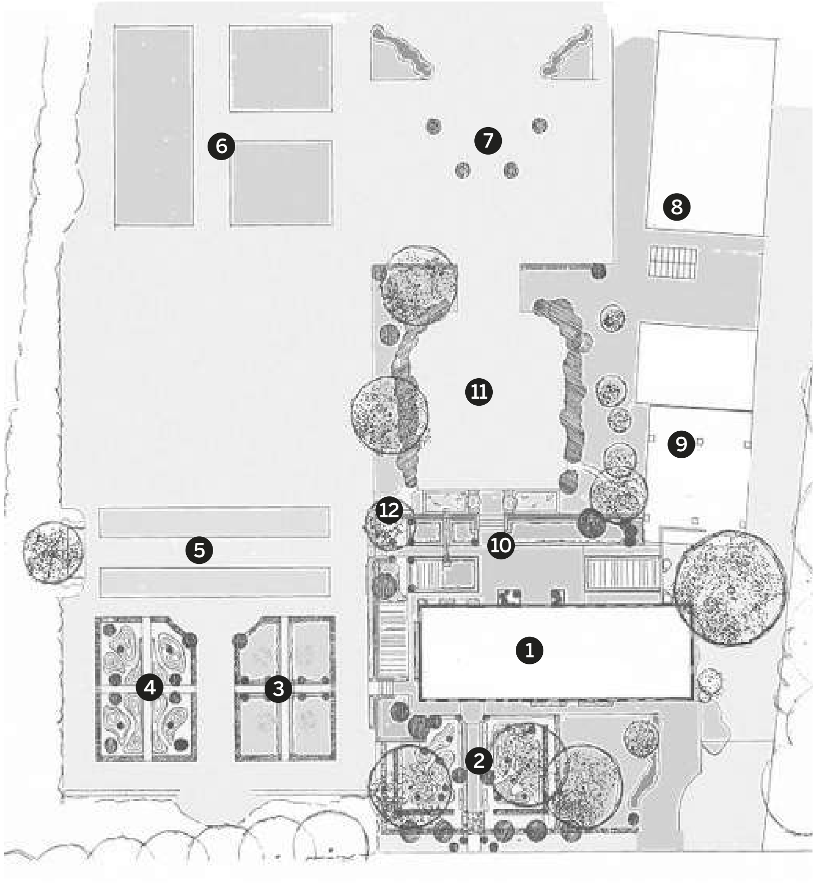
5 Prune the plant twice a year. Trim by hand in spring with pruning shears, because the leaves suffer less than if they are cut with powered shears. Trim again in autumn.



The white bark of the *Juglans regia* provides a sharp contrast to the green of the hedging and matches the colour of the house.

Below Behind the gravelled topiary garden with its quirky shapes, an *Amelanchier canadensis* provides soft orange autumn colour.





GARDEN PLAN

1 House
2 Front garden
3 Rose garden
4 Gravelled topiary garden
5 Rectangular ponds
6 Woodland garden
7 Four topiary guards
8 Stables
9 Barn
10 Terrace
11 Lawn
12 Umbrella-shaped yew

9 of Francis's favourite autumn plants

1 *Euonymus alatus*
This is one of the first shrubs that colours in autumn. 4.7m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b†.

2 *Arum italicum* 'Marmoratum'
More of a springtime plant, but the foliage is as lovely as the flowers. 45cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Fastigiatum'
In autumn this tree offers lovely yellow-orange foliage, and flowers when still young. 13m. USDA 5a-10a.

4 *Quercus coccinea* 'Splendens'
Francis loves this oak and planted it because its leaves turn "reddest of all reds" in autumn. 18m. AGM. RHS H6.

5 *Chrysanthemum*
Chrysanthemums are found in every old Flemish garden. This is an old-fashioned, unnamed cultivar given by a neighbour.

6 *Panicum virgatum* 'Rotstrahlbusch'
Grasses lend lightness to a planting. Francis uses this bi-coloured panicum with its green and red leaves to line his borders. 1.5m. USDA 5a-9b.

7 *Gillenia trifoliata*
Another perennial that looks good in all seasons. It's covered in pretty white flowers in summer then turns purple-red in autumn. 1m. AGM. RHS H7.

8 *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia'
This false acacia brightens up the front garden with its lime-green leaves in summer that turn yellow in autumn. 8m. USDA 5a-9b.

9 *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*
The leaves turn red while the plant is in bloom. It also makes a good and very easy ground cover. 30cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

▷ (*Quercus coccinea* 'Splendens') and yellow tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) bring rich colour to the garden's form.

When the couple moved here, the house was surrounded by farmland. The expansiveness of the land was a challenge that Francis dealt with by imposing a strong structure of garden rooms. "You have to block the view so you don't see everything at one glance," he says. Yet a feeling of freedom and vastness persists.

The 1960s' house was functional and not sympathetic to the grand garden design Francis and Ann had in mind, so they added a façade of old bricks. They laid perennial borders and three small kitchen gardens on the west and south sides of the house. Also on the west side is a rose garden and a gravelled area with box clipped into soft shapes. From here if you cross a large lawn you enter a woodland garden which blends into a small wood.

Ann and Francis believe a well-tended garden works best when contrasted against a wilder area, so they created their own backdrop. On the southern half of their long strip of land, which is skirted by a small river at the far end, they planted a length of woodland with willows and alder trees, plus a bamboo grove. With more than seven acres of land altogether, there was enough space to play with.

They also planted apples, roses and perennials in this part of the garden. In summer, a very special iris flowers here. "Christopher Lloyd gave it to me," says Francis. "But I've forgotten the name, so for us it is *Iris* Christopher Lloyd." Two long rows of box lead back from the river towards the side of the house. These bushes are not pruned and reach Francis's shoulders, and in a few years they will form a tunnel.

When Francis and Ann started creating their garden, box blight was unheard of. They've found the first signs of it in the front garden, in a low parterre containing pruned apples and pears. "Today, I would not choose box. I would plant *Viburnum* x *burkwoodii* for larger topiary, and yew for smaller hedges," says Francis.

As much as the couple and their two teenage sons love their garden, they also love the wilderness beyond. A fox resides in the grove, and a roebuck spends his days in the bamboo. "We couldn't live in a city," says Ann. They've named their garden Buxusbeemden; *beemden* is a Flemish word for meadow. A strip of meadow connects the formal garden with the wilder area. When they sowed it years ago, there were lots of marguerite daisies, but most of them have vanished. This meadow is Francis's own little challenge. "It is hard to control. In my garden I am the boss of nature, but in this meadow nature tells me what to do." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Hof aan de Buxusbeemden, 2200 Herentals, Belgium.
Tel +32 (0) 475 28 60 05.
Open The garden is open the last weekend in June each year, groups by appointment.

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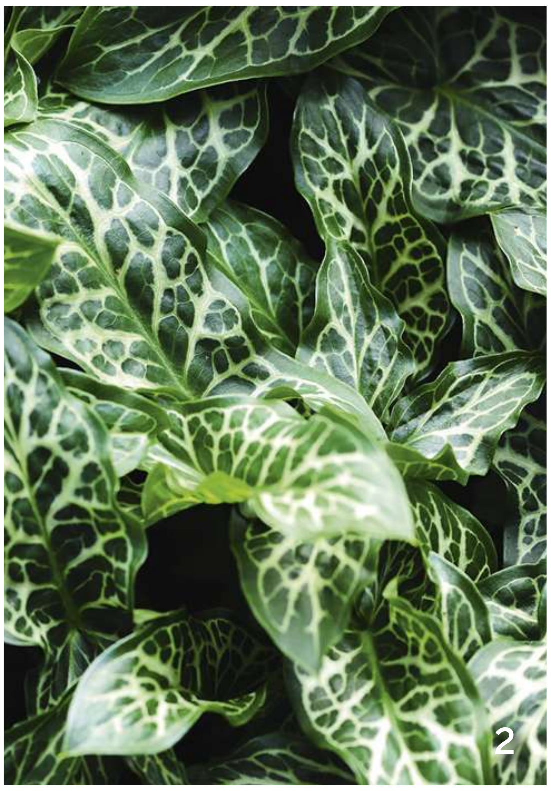
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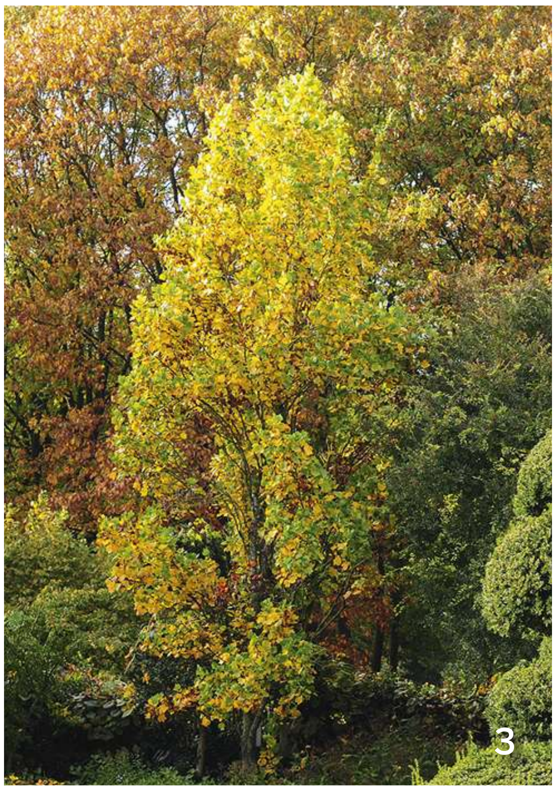
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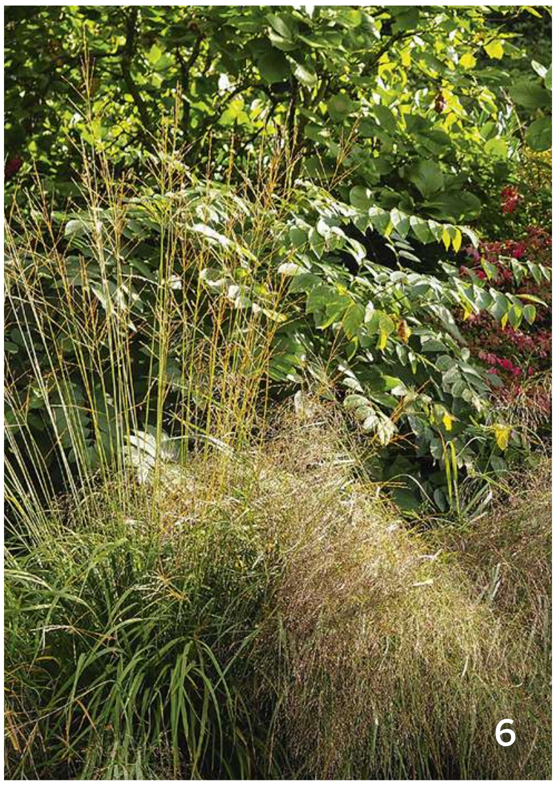
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A winter wren and Wilson's warbler perch by a framed branch of *Camellia sinensis*.

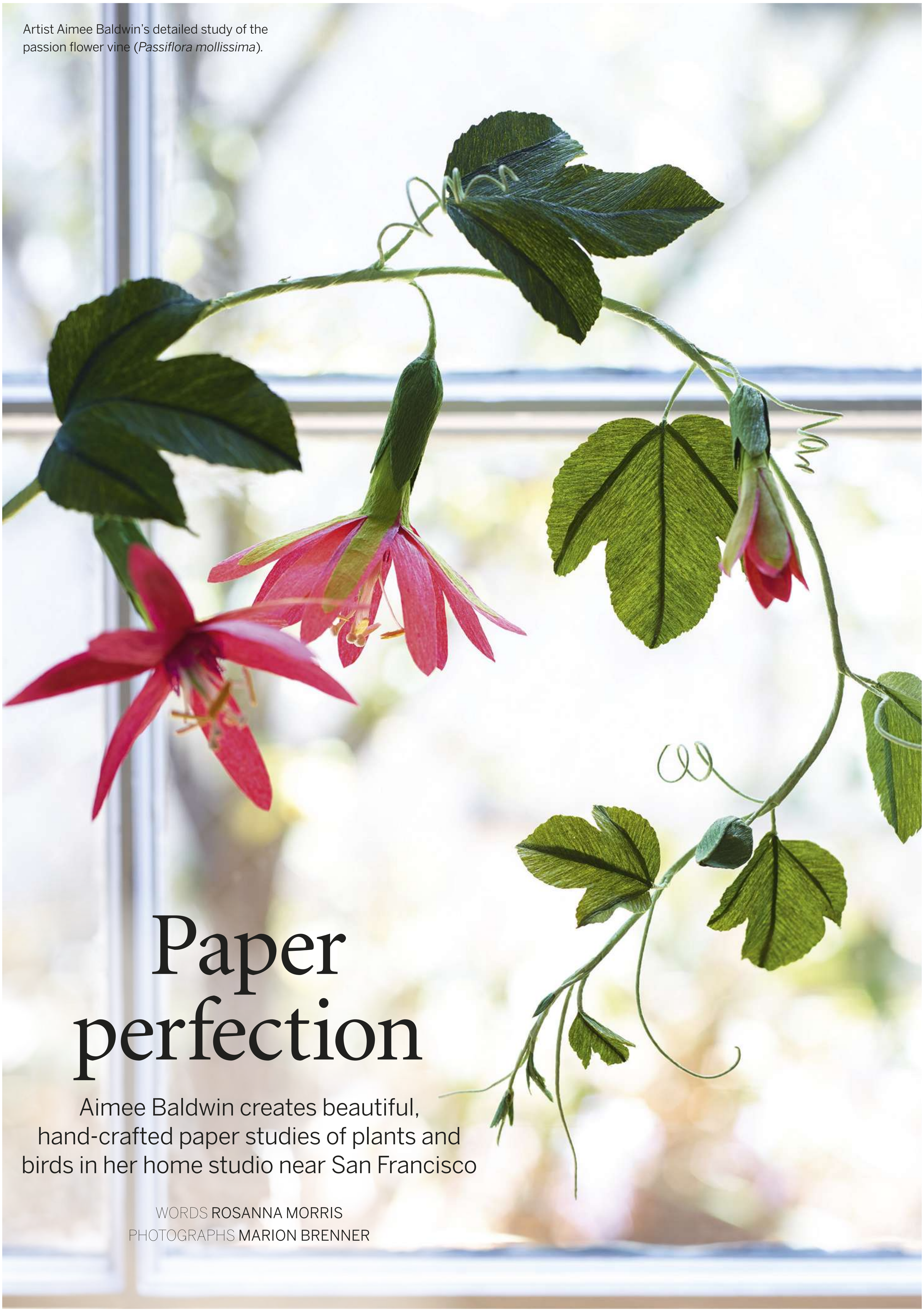
The endangered western lily *(Lilium occidentale)*.

Sinapis arvensis - wild mustard
family Brassicaceae
collected by Aimee Baldwin
1 flower enlarged seven times life-size
2 - mature seed pod with seeds
enlarged five times life-size

Wild mustard *(Sinapis arvensis)* with enlarged flower and seedpod.

Drawing upon Nature
OWLS
BIRDS of PREY

Shelves in Aimee's studio display her paper birds, plants and insects.



Artist Aimee Baldwin's detailed study of the passion flower vine (*Passiflora mollissima*).

Paper perfection

Aimee Baldwin creates beautiful, hand-crafted paper studies of plants and birds in her home studio near San Francisco

WORDS ROSANNA MORRIS
PHOTOGRAPHS MARION BRENNER

> *“Aimee’s technique is so intricate and exacting that it can take her up to 30 hours to make a simple plant and up to a week to craft a small bird”*

When out hiking in California State Parks, such as Mount Diablo, 50 miles east of San Francisco, artist Aimee Baldwin will pause often. Not to rest or to admire the views, but to crouch down and sprawl in the gravel to get as close as she can to inspect a wild flower.

The plant may be only 2cm high and barely peeking through the ground but Aimee will spy it from a distance. It might be *Fritillaria* or *Trillium*, *Dichelostemma* or *Mimulus* – some of Aimee’s favourites. On occasion she might linger to take some notes or a picture of the plant, which she’ll use back home in her studio in Berkeley, where she dedicates hours to crafting 3D models of these plants in paper.

“It’s like a treasure hunt,” says Aimee. “It’s frustrating to my friends who want to cover ground quickly on a hike but thankfully most of them are patient and happy to examine flowers, insects, galls, fungi, birds or whatever else I find.”

Inspired by early natural-history practices, Aimee crafts paper studies of plants and birds by hand and displays them in glass domes and frames in much the same way as taxidermy and herbarium sheets. Indeed, she calls her works vegan taxidermy. Her pieces are incredibly lifelike yet sculpted entirely from German crepe paper that she colours with paint. Sometimes her works are mistaken for the real thing and it’s no surprise Aimee has also dabbled in *trompe l’oeil* mural painting in the past.

Aimee’s love of nature and natural history stems from her childhood when she went on camping trips with her parents and spent time with her grandfather, who was a keen gardener. “Despite living in the city, my parents showed me the great natural treasures of the western United States – spectacular deserts, desolate high mountains, dramatic rugged seashores and everything in between,” she says.

Whether it’s the drooping red trumpet-shaped flowers of a *Brugmansia sanguinea*, the yellow hue on the petals of a *Brassica rapa* (field mustard) or the realistic feathered wings of a purple martin, Aimee’s creations are scientific in their execution yet stunning works of art. “Making a plant or bird out of paper gives me an intimate study of that subject,” she says.

Aimee’s studio on the ground floor of her house is dominated by an old, carved, wood-and-glass shop display counter, which she uses as a work surface and for storing paper. Lining the walls are antique Victorian floor-to-ceiling redwood kitchen cabinets that contain more materials, sketches and finished pieces. Shelves hold past experiments, small collections of rocks and fossils, sample leaves, seedpods, dead insects and textile pieces that Aimee uses for inspiration.

Aimee’s technique is so intricate and exacting that it can take her up to 30 hours to make a simple plant and up to a week to craft a small bird. Working from a potted specimen or cutting, she sculpturally ‘sketches’ the plant to rough out its patterns and shapes. She then creates individual pieces, such as the stamen, petals, buds and leaves. “I study the shapes of leaves, veins on leaves, shapes of stems, placement of leaves, flower parts, stages of the flower, and other growth-pattern details,” she says. “I decide at this point about the final composition.”

Next, she selects a frame to fit the final piece and airbrushes the paper plant parts to tint them to the correct colours, as the crepe paper has a limited palette. Finally, she assembles the plant, composes a layout and mounts it to a board that fits the frame.

She’s currently working on a branch of California live oak, *Quercus agrifolia*, which will have several native birds (bushtits and a chickadee) perching on it. “I hope my art has enough puzzling detail to pull a viewer into a long thoughtful gaze,” she smiles. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address 1256 Francisco St, Berkeley, CA 94702, USA.
Email vegan.taxidermy@gmail.com
Website vegantaxidermy.com

Aimee is undertaking an artist residency at the Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston, Massachusetts. She visited the garden over the summer to study the plants and hopes to have an exhibition of works on show there early next year. See Aimee’s website above for updates and visit **towerhillbg.org** for more information.

A display of test pieces and works in progress.

Aimee uses crepe paper, wire and scissors to create pieces of art.

Aimee works on a *Rosa* 'Bardou Job', an heirloom rose found thriving on Alcatraz.

The red angel's trumpet, *Brugmansia sanguinea.*

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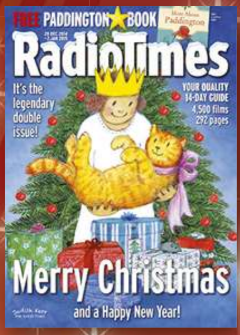

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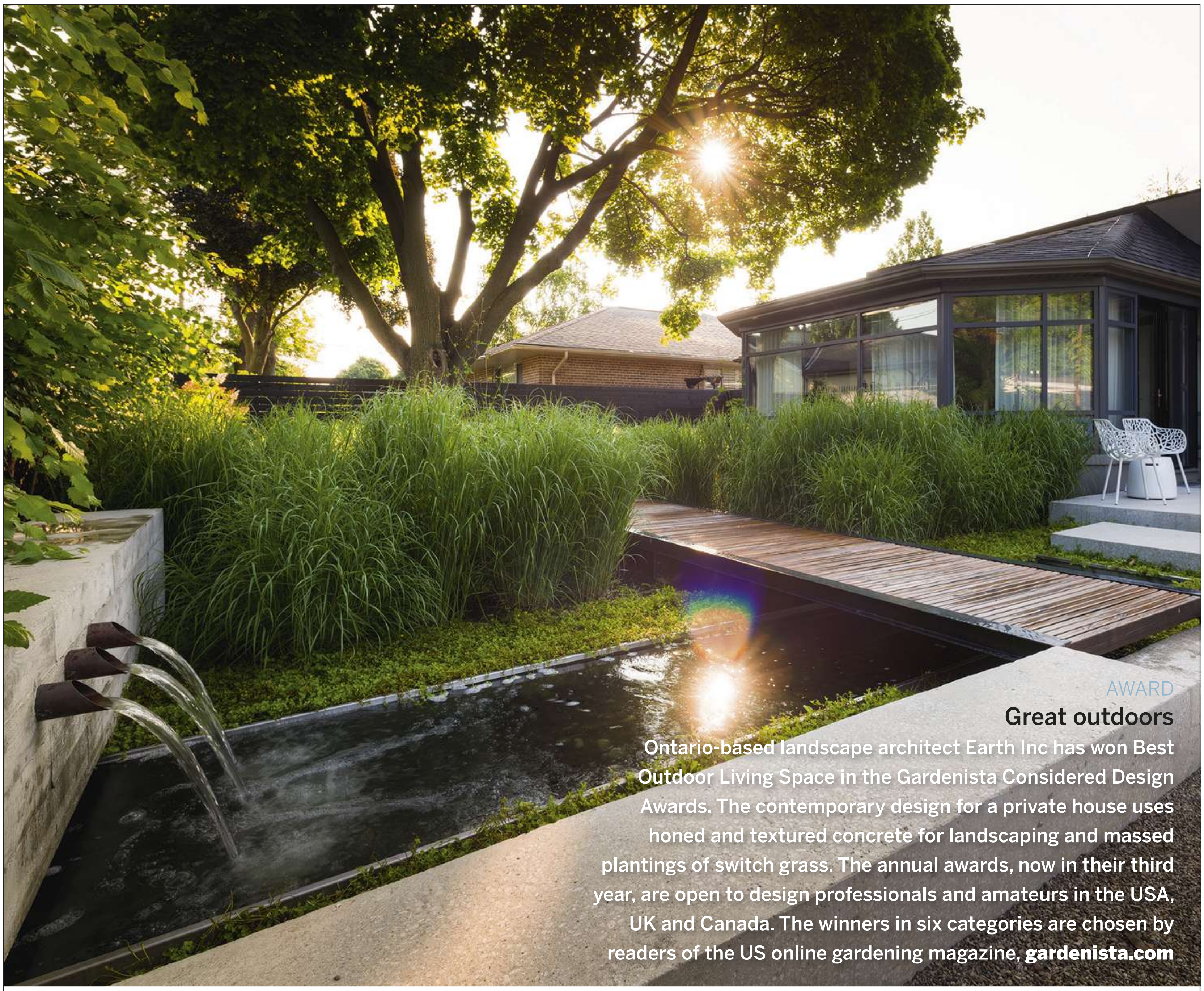
design

Design update, ideas and sourcebook

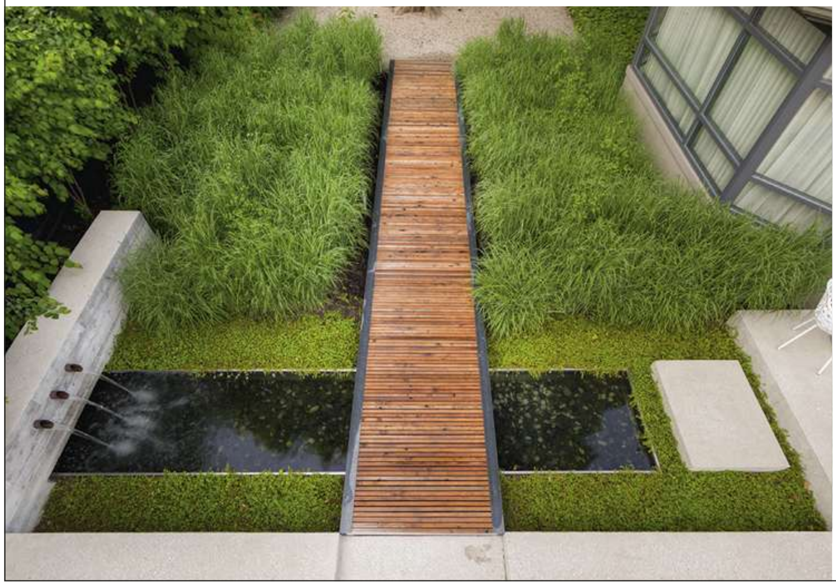
UPDATE COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**

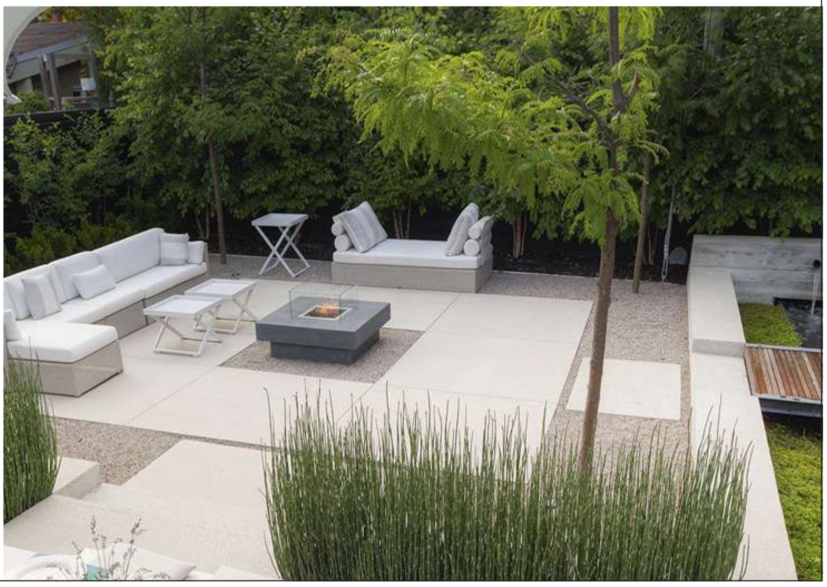


AWARD

Great outdoors

Ontario-based landscape architect Earth Inc has won Best Outdoor Living Space in the Gardenista Considered Design Awards. The contemporary design for a private house uses honed and textured concrete for landscaping and massed plantings of switch grass. The annual awards, now in their third year, are open to design professionals and amateurs in the USA, UK and Canada. The winners in six categories are chosen by readers of the US online gardening magazine, **gardenista.com**





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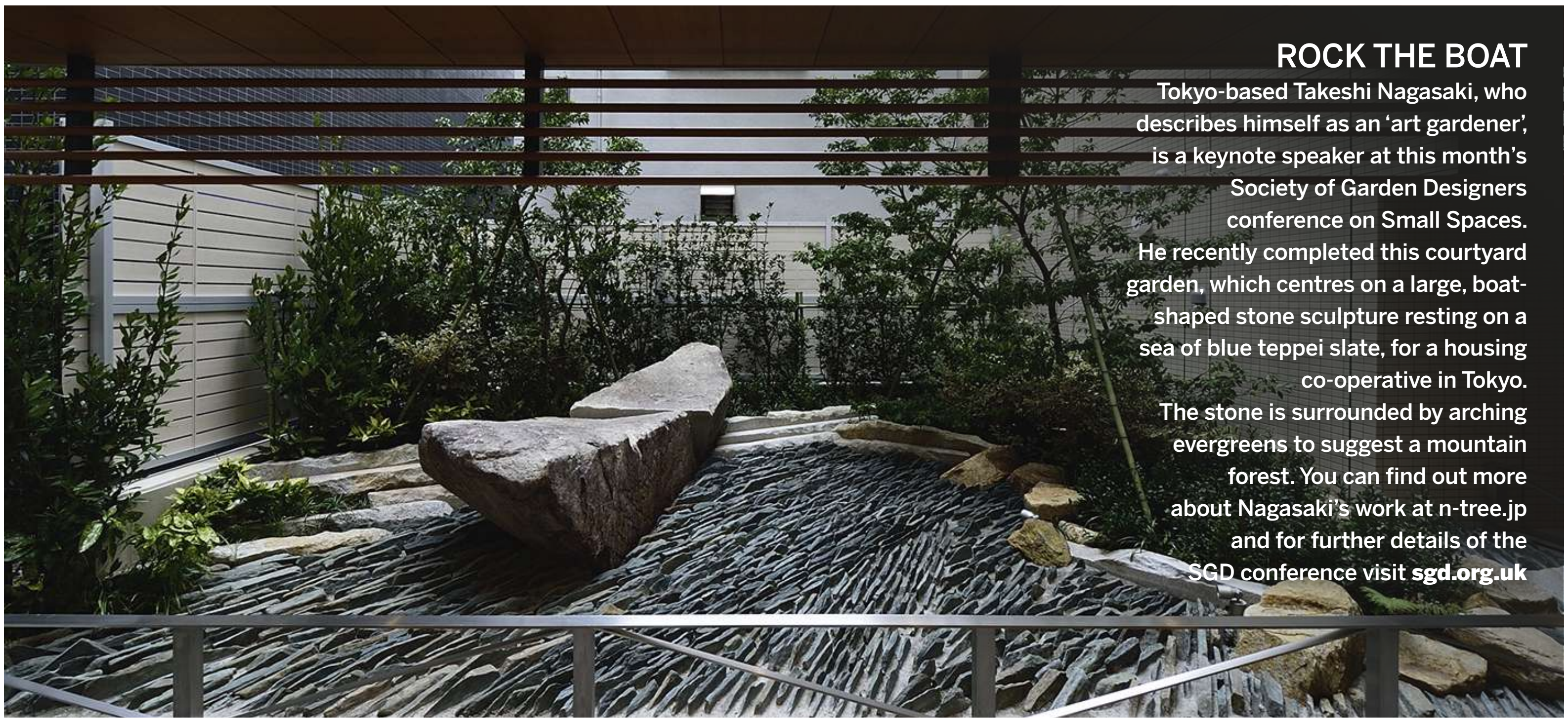
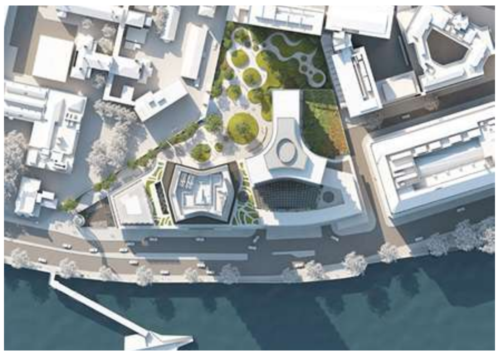
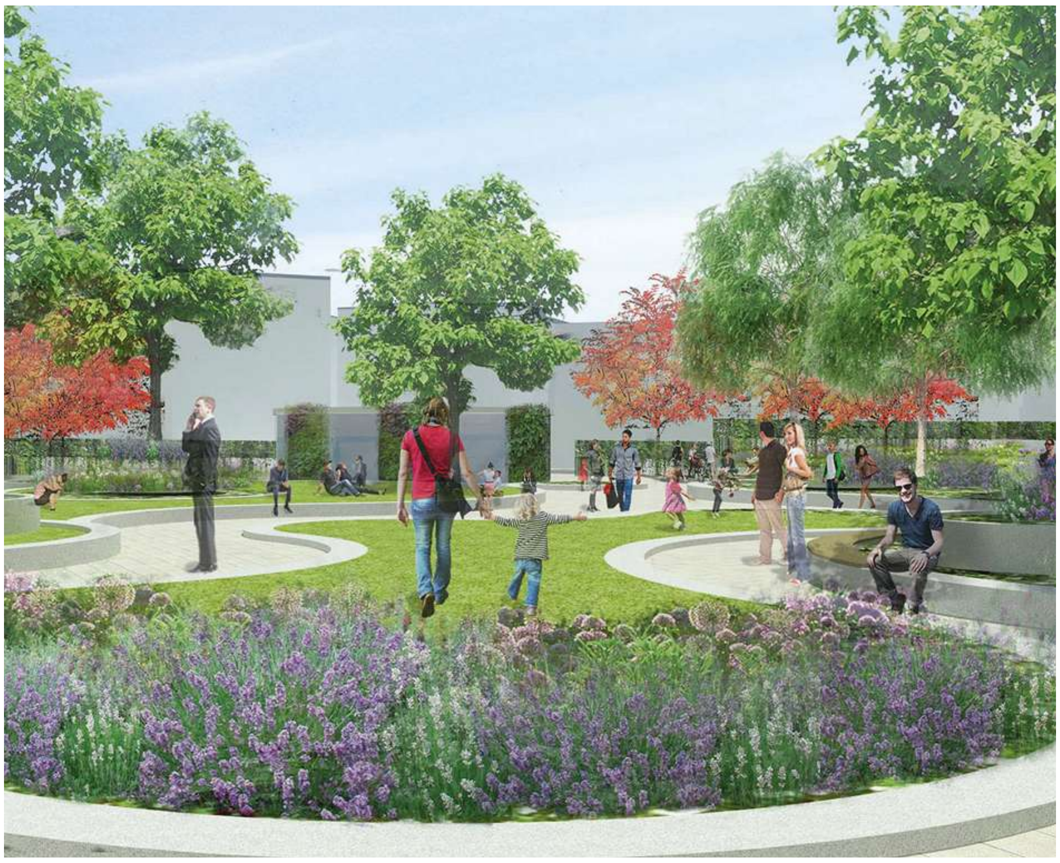


ROCK THE BOAT

Tokyo-based Takeshi Nagasaki, who describes himself as an 'art gardener', is a keynote speaker at this month's Society of Garden Designers conference on Small Spaces. He recently completed this courtyard garden, which centres on a large, boat-shaped stone sculpture resting on a sea of blue teppei slate, for a housing co-operative in Tokyo. The stone is surrounded by arching evergreens to suggest a mountain forest. You can find out more about Nagasaki's work at n-tree.jp and for further details of the SGD conference visit **sgd.org.uk**





PROPOSAL

Height of style

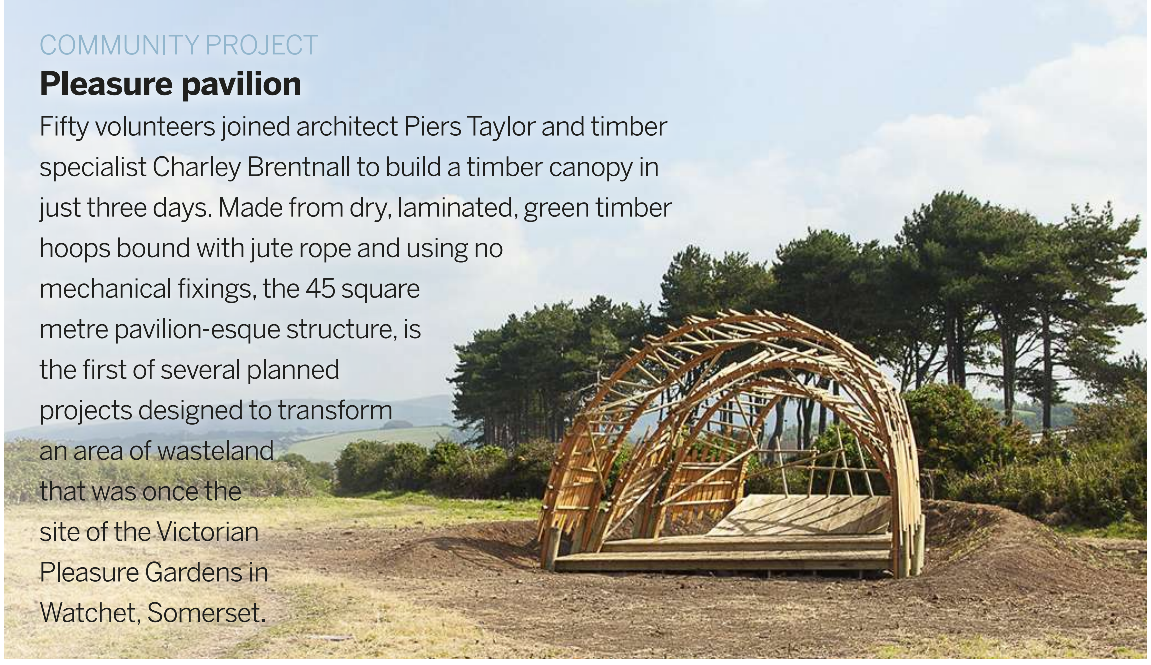
Plans have been submitted to Westminster Council for the landscaping by Robert Myers Associates of the redeveloped Millbank Tower on the Thames in central London. The design of the areas of public and private spaces, which include rear gardens, street frontage and a first-floor courtyard garden, will also provide abstract patterns when viewed from above.

PARK RENOVATION

City oasis

Landscape Architects J&L Gibbons, working with Erect Architecture, has renovated a Grade II-listed, linear park that sits between two housing estates in north London. The four-acre Alexandra Road Park, designed in the 1970s by Janet Jack, was the first 20th-century landscape to be listed in the UK and is made up of ridges and valleys, bisected by a series of diagonal paths. New play equipment has been installed in some of the five play areas and the original planting of trees and shrubs has been enhanced.

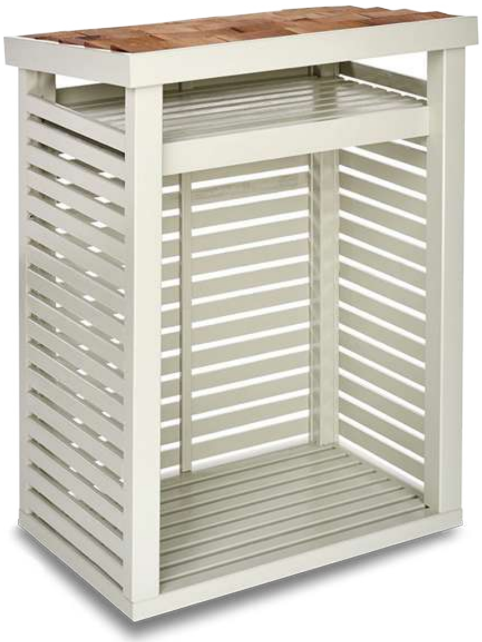
TAKESHI NAGASAKI, ROBERT MYERS, SARAH BLEE/ J & L GIBBONS



COMMUNITY PROJECT

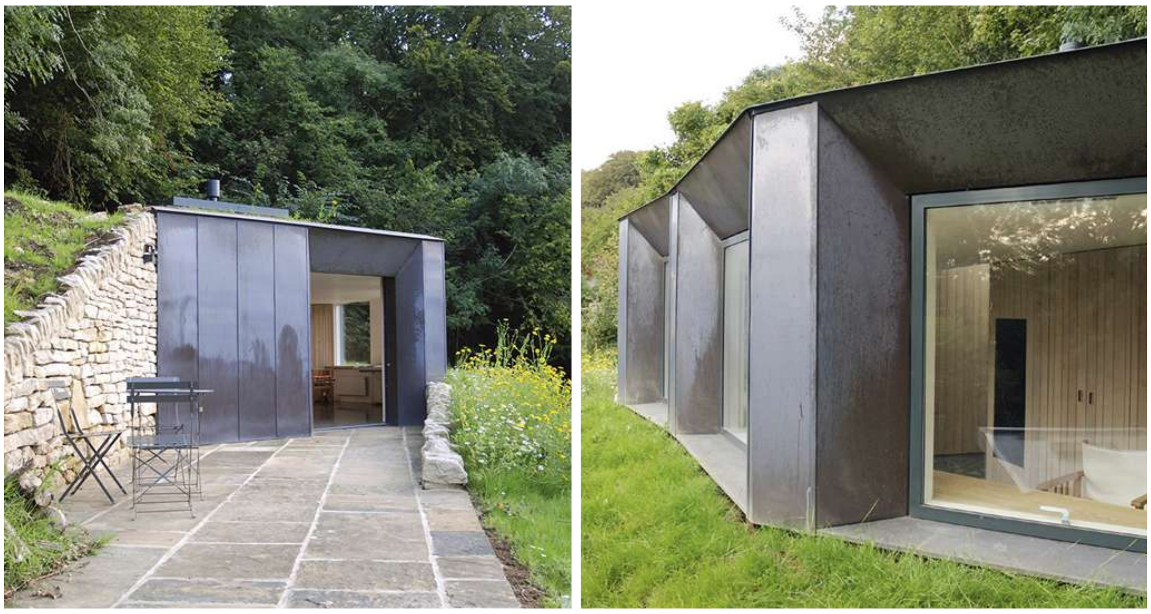
Pleasure pavilion

Fifty volunteers joined architect Piers Taylor and timber specialist Charley Brentnall to build a timber canopy in just three days. Made from dry, laminated, green timber hoops bound with jute rope and using no mechanical fixings, the 45 square metre pavilion-esque structure, is the first of several planned projects designed to transform an area of wasteland that was once the site of the Victorian Pleasure Gardens in Watchet, Somerset.



NEAT IDEA

Get ready for winter with this compact slatted timber log store from the Garden Trellis Company. The self-assembly City Log Store is available in natural timber or in a range of 11 colour options with a choice of cedar shingle or felt roof tiles, and also has an optional shelf for kindling. It measures 125cm high x 89.5cm wide x 57cm deep, and prices start at £183.40. ***gardentrellis.co.uk***



AWARD

Blending in

Stonewood Design's striking garden studio for a private garden near Bath has won the RIBA South West Award 2015 and been shortlisted for the RIBA Stephen Lawrence Prize 2015. The building, which is clad in pre-patinated copper to complement the colours of the landscape, merges into the garden's slope with a planted roof and windows angled to maximise views. **stonewooddesign.co.uk**

Notebook

- **The London College of Garden Design** has launched a new annual six-month course for those who want to expand their skills and expertise in planting design. The Planting Design Certificate will be led by garden designer Andrew Fisher Tomlin and held in the Orangery at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The course starts in January 2016. lcgd.org.uk
- Find inspiration for planting shrubs and trees at the nine-acre woodland garden attached to **BlueBell Nursery**. The Derbyshire tree and shrub specialist, will open its garden near Ashby de la Zouch for the NGS on 22 November. ngs.org.uk
- **RHS Rosemoor's winter sculpture exhibition** starts on 21 November with an interesting mix of exhibits spread throughout the garden. Free guided sculpture walks leave the Visitor Centre on most Wednesdays at 11.30am. rhs.org.uk/gardens/Rosemoor/
- Take a guided walk around the historic garden at **Lowther Castle**, Penrith, with head gardener Martin Ogle on 26 November at 1.30pm-3.30pm. lowthercastle.org/head-gardener-guided-walks
- Book now for two Christmas workshops at **Petersham Nurseries** in London. Festive container planting demonstration (1 December, £15) and make your own Christmas wreath using seasonal foliage (8 and 9 December, £85, including all materials). petershamnurseries.com

GLYN JARRETT; © JO CHAMBERS

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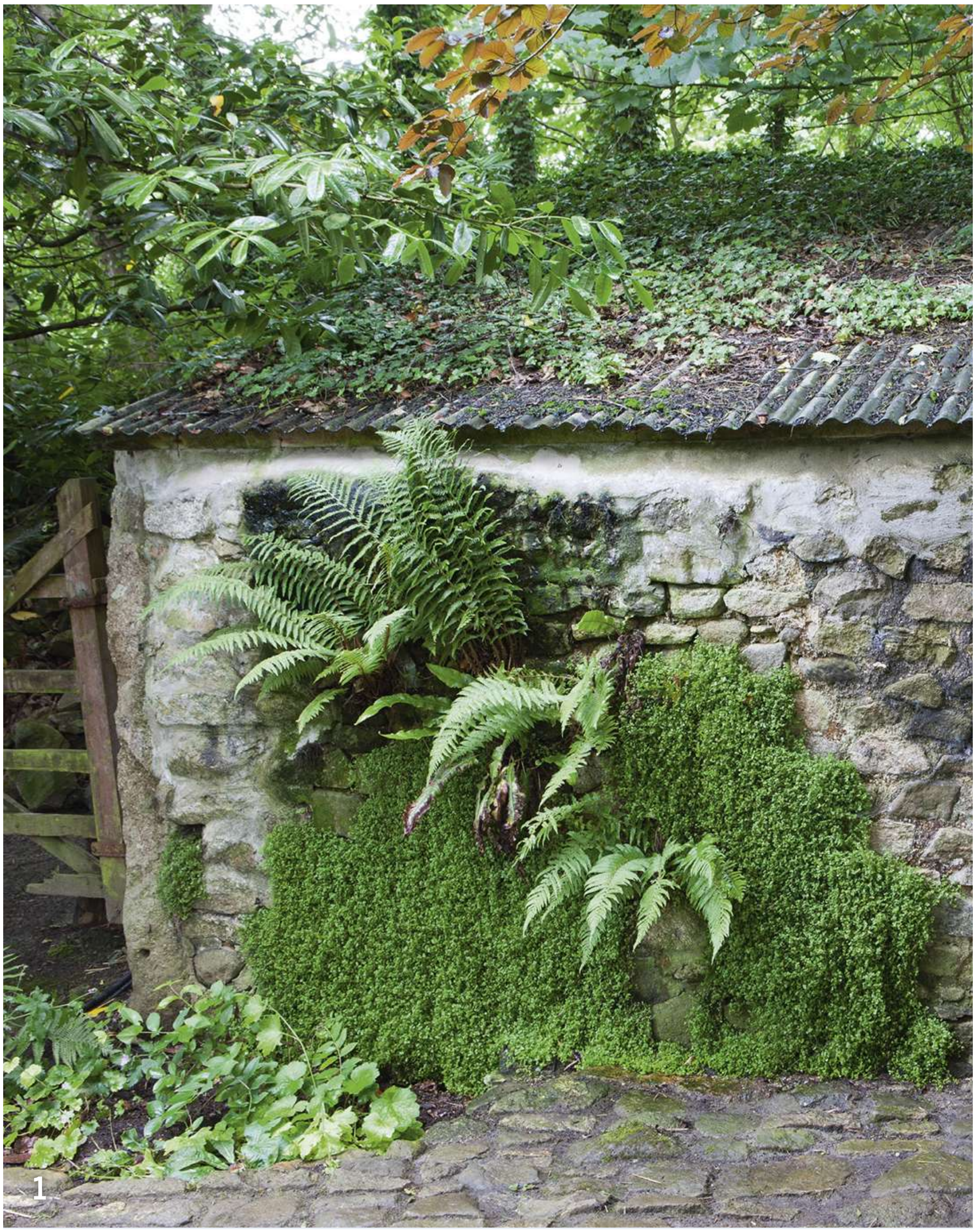
1 Vertical gardening

A shady wall presents an opportunity for vertical gardening. Here the strong architectural form of our native male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) grows again a contrasting green trail of *Campanula portenschlagiana*. The old stone wall frames the simple composition. Other plants suited to the variable dry conditions of walls include dainty maidenhair ferns and the more robust-looking hart's tongue ferns (*Asplenium scolopendrium*).



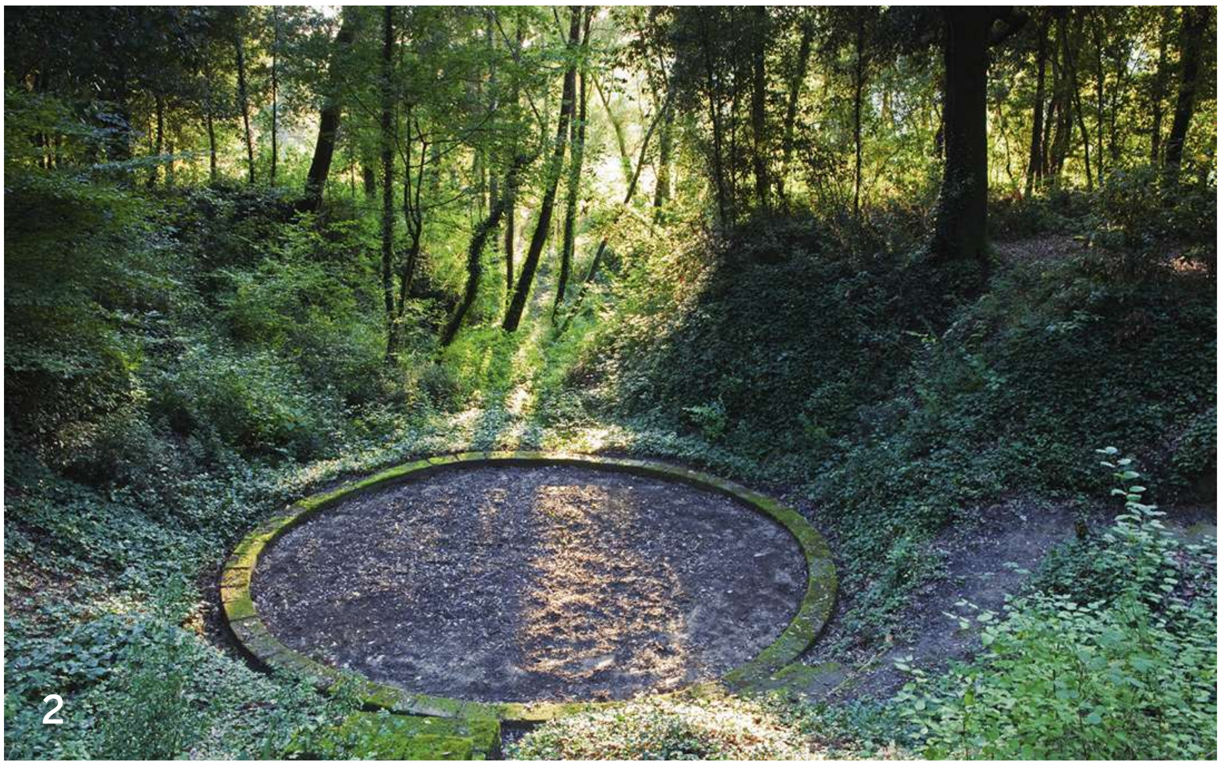
1 MARK BOLTON / GAP PHOTOS

Sarah Price is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 Olympic Park.

Bringing shady corners to life

Shade is sometimes seen as a problem but it is the natural habitat for a host of beautiful woodland flowers, ferns and mosses that can create a wonderfully magical atmosphere

WORDS SARAH PRICE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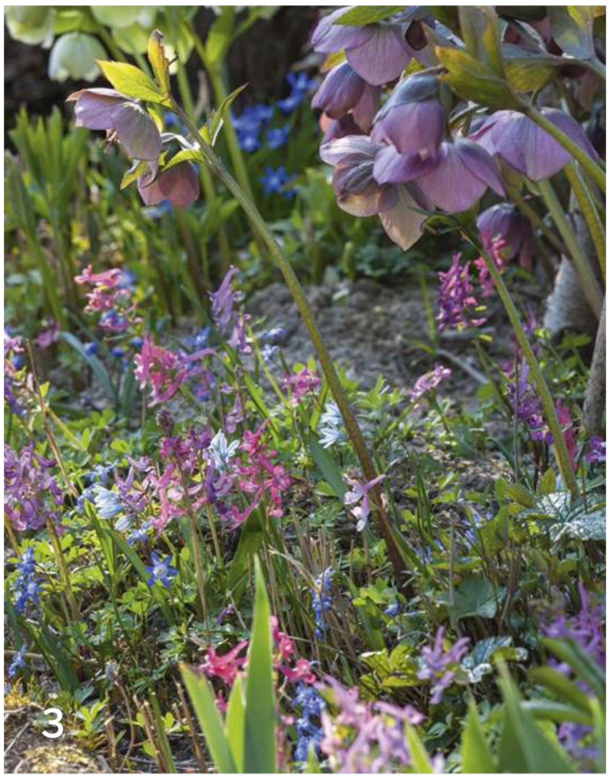
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2 CHARLES HAWES; 3 CHRISTA BRAND; 4; ALL GAP PHOTOS

2 Magic circle

A simple ground pattern of stone, or grouping of urns or a seat, can be enough to create a memorable moment in a shady corner. Within the low light of this magical glade, this circle created out of moss-covered-blocks by the American sculptor Sheppard Craige in his garden, Il Bosco Della Ragnaia in Italy, holds our attention and captures our imagination.

3 Dainty treasures

Fleeting spring blooms, such as these pink *Corydalis solida* 'Dieter Schacht' and *Helleborus* x *hybridus,* and bright-blue *Scilla*, provide invaluable early colour and look beautiful among the fresh unfurling fronds of ferns.

4 Green carpets

Shade-loving ground cover, such as *Cornus canadensis* will create a weed-suppressing mat under trees and shrubs in neutral to acid soils. Striking white flowers appear from late spring, followed by colourful, bright red berries. Epimediums and ferns are also good ground cover and make a beautiful backdrop for emerging grasses, such as *Molinia caerulea* 'Heidebraut', which is tolerant of light shade.

It's easy to think of shade as being difficult and unrewarding, it's dark, there are few flowers in the summer months and only the toughest plants survive. Yet some of the most intimate moments of natural theatre are in shady environments; in bluebell woods before the canopy of leaves unfurl; behind a waterfall where intricate ferns and liverworts glisten in cool, misty low light; or the reflective rainwater pools within the dimples of mossy tree roots. In the garden, variations in light levels extend the dynamic range from full sun to the shadiest hollow, adding mystery and depth.

The limited palette of plants suited to shady conditions forces a designer to embrace the idea of 'less is more'; fewer species but in greater numbers. This gives shady places a strong identity and atmosphere. The first thing to do is to figure out what kind of shade you're working with. In narrow town gardens the shade cast by the shadow of a building may mean that certain areas never receive any direct light. Here, bamboo and the sword-shaped leaves of *Astelia nervosa* will create the feel of a jungle garden. The flickering diffused shade cast by the lighter canopies of trees from the forest edge are perfect conditions for grassy foils of sedges and woodland ferns, a perfect, soft backdrop to successions of flowering spring bulbs. A north-facing border with a high wall behind will have better light conditions than under a tree canopy allowing some flowering plants, such as violet-coloured honesty (*Lunaria annua*), *Eurybia schreberi* and *Digitalis lutea*, to be grown. Some gardens, typically in the north and west of the UK have cool and damp shade, which is perfect for growing rare beauties such as the famous blue Himalayan poppy.

The toughest conditions are in the summer months, when many gardens suffer from dry shade, particularly under mature ▷

5 Eye-catching foliage

In Great Dixter's Exotic Garden, the drooping, umbrella-like palmate foliage of *Begonia luxurians* and the huge, round glossy leaves of *Farfugium japonicum* create a glamorous statement. Both 'tender exotics' are happy growing in the humid shade of a jungle of tall grasses and bananas.

6 Woodland mix

These *Anemone apennina* and *Cyclamen repandum* grow in drifts within Corsica's old pine woods. You can create a similar effect using the readily available *Cyclamen hederifolium* or silver-leaved strains of *Cyclamen coum* among woodland treasures. Think snowdrops, hellebores and lacy, evergreen ferns, such as *Polystichum setiferum*. Mimic nature by leaving a layer of leaf mulch to help trap moisture.

7 Spontaneous colour

The self-seeding Welsh poppy (*Meconopsis cambrica*), here growing with Lady's mantle, is always welcome in my garden. Its intense bursts of yellow and vermilion come and go through the summer months, appearing in unexpected places. It will grow in both sun and shade adding sparkle where ever it nestles.

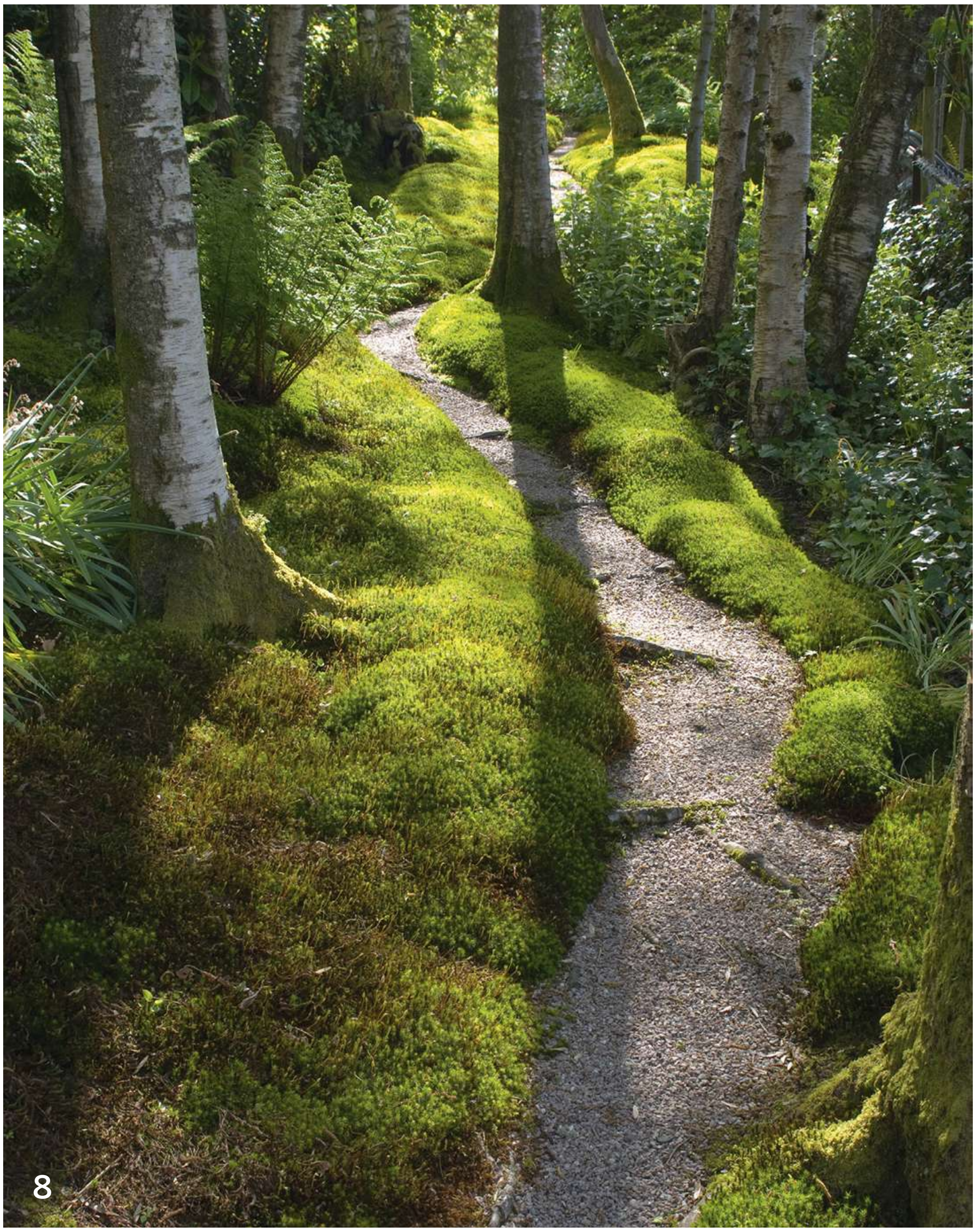
5 GREAT DIXTER / MARIANNE MAJERUS GARDEN IMAGES; 6 MARIANNE MAJERUS GARDEN IMAGES; 7 GRAHAM STRONG / GAP PHOTOS

▷ trees. Plants, such as ivy and *Vinca minor,* will make the most of the moisture in the spring and adapt to the bone-dry conditions of the summer. Ferns date back to the time of the dinosaurs and many can survive in the darkest of corners. *Blechnum spicant* even looks prehistoric; it's tough and leathery but its large pinnate fronds create compelling patterns in dry shade.

One of the most entrancing spots in my garden is a shady bank under two veteran oaks. The soil is bone dry, yet every September I marvel at the pink, up-turned flowers of *Cyclamen hederifolium*. Its saucer-like corms nestle among hart's tongue ferns and the bright-red berries of *Arum italicum*. This colourful picture is framed by the upright fronds of *Polypodium vulgare* – an adaptable evergreen fern that you often see growing on the top of stone walls. In spring, snowdrops and deep-crimson *Cyclamen coum* create a magical fairyland. Sometimes dismissed as a municipal shrub, *Lonicera nitida* grows loosely as a cloudy backdrop to this enchanted world.

Inhospitable dry shade is a good place to keep potentially invasive plants in check. *Euonymus fortunei* 'Kewensis' forms a durable, sprawling evergreen mat, rooting as it spreads; if it comes up against a vertical surface it will attempt to climb it. I've seen it stretching up colossal planters making them look as though they've sprouted from the ground.

Designing in shade is about creating contrasting pictures; towering trees that rise above a low, woodland tapestry, a dark avenue with a sunlit statue at the far end, an open glade in a densely populated wood. One designer who really understood the emotive power of contrasting pictures was the influential Dutch



8 FIONA LEA / GAP PHOTOS

8 Mossy cushions

Diane Hewitt and David Kinsman have encouraged plants that thrive in a humid climate to colonise their garden, Windy Hall, beside Windermere, Cumbria. Here shade-loving mosses, ferns and lichens dominate, forming low, detailed patchworks that draw you into this otherworldly scene.

Further reading

Beth Chatto's Green Tapestry
by Beth Chatto
(HarperCollins Illustrated, 1999)

Moss Gardening
by George Schenk
(Timber Press, 1997)

The Shade Garden: Shade-loving Plants for Year-round Interest
by Beth Chatto
(Cassell, 2005)

Where to buy

Barracott Plants
Tel 01822 832234,
www.barracottplants.co.uk

Edrom Nurseries
Tel 01890 771386, edrom-nurseries.co.uk

Long Acre Plants
plantsforshade.co.uk

ShadyPlants.com
Tel 01452 812459,
shadyplants.com

landscape architect Mien Ruys. Renowned for her post-war modernist experiments with plants and materials, her own garden, Tuinen Mien Ruys in Dedemsvaart, the Netherlands, is still open to the public. Her designs are simple: a path leads you through a dark shrubbery to a small, perfectly square pool that mirrors bright sky; a woodland dominated by rhododendron suddenly opens to reveal a huge circular bed of clover. The clover's emerald foliage shines brightly making the surrounding shade appear even darker.

Shade in a garden isn't always a bad thing. At their best, shady spaces add depth to a garden and heighten its atmosphere. But like any constraint that gardeners face – be it size, slope, soil type, climate, or budget – shade just requires us to draw on a higher level of artistry and imagination. □

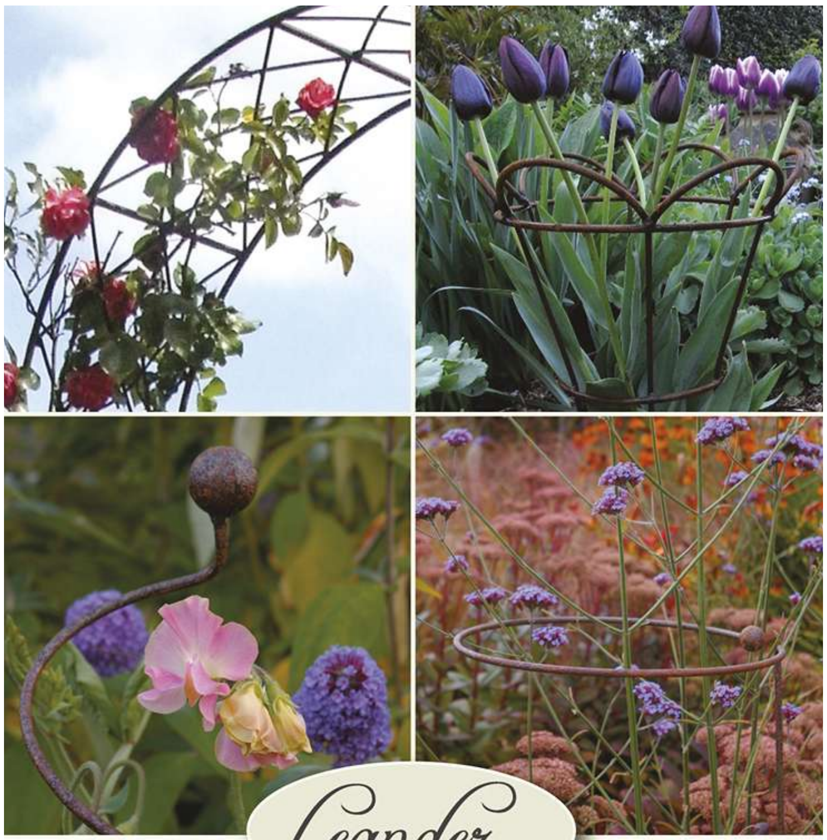
Plant suggestions for shady situations

Shrubs for shade
- *Hydrangea aspera* Villosa Group
- *Hydrangea sargentiana*
- *Kirengeshoma palmata*
- *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *digyna* 'Purple Stem'

Late flowers for shade
- *Actaea cordifolia*
- *Eurybia divaricata*
- *Eurybia schreberi*
- *Geranium macrorrhizum*
- *Geranium nodosum*
- *Geranium phaeum*,
- *Geranium sylvaticum*
- *Kalimeris incisa* 'Charlotte'
- *Selinum wallichianum*
- *Tricyrtis formosana* 'Dark Beauty'

Dry soil in shade
- *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost'
- *Carex muskingumensis*
- *Epimedium* x *rubrum*
- *Epimedium* x *versicolor*
- *Galium odoratum*
- *Luzula sylvatica*
- *Luzula nivea*
- *Ophiopogon planiscapus*
- *Silene fimbriata*
- *Stylophorum lasiocarpum*
- *Symphytum ibericum*
- *Trachystemon orientalis*

Unusual details
- *Adiantum venustum*
- *Asarum splendens*
- *Athyrium* 'Ghost'
- *Corydalis cashmeriana*
- *Cyclamen coum*
- *C. coum* Pewter Group
- *C. coum* 'Maurice Dryden'
- *Epimedium* 'Amanogawa'
- *Pellaea rotundifolia*
- *Viola koreana*



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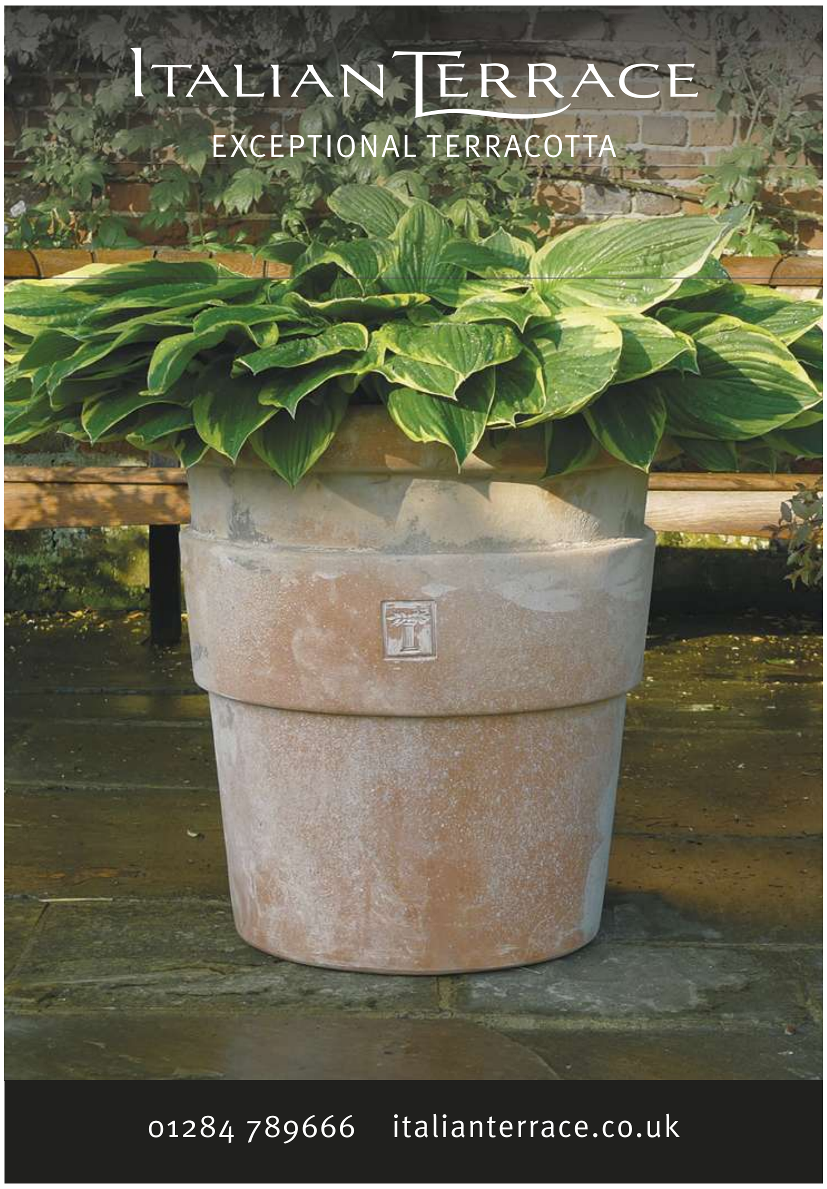

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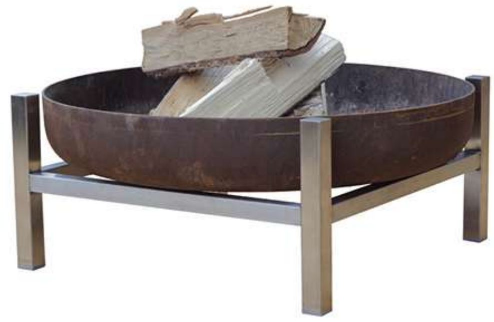

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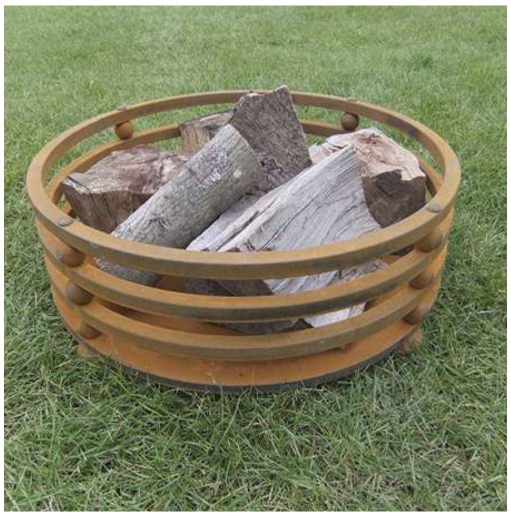
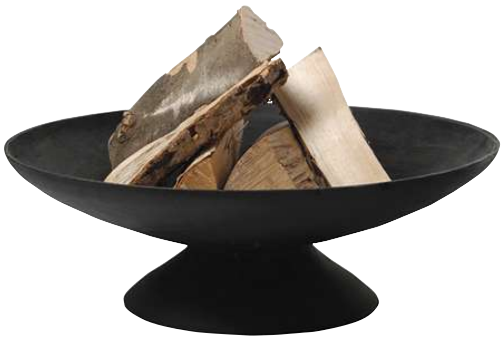
07575 054420, arpestudio.com



RUSTIC
Large Malvern Brazier,
£375, Iron Art of Bath,
01225 311273, ironart.co.uk



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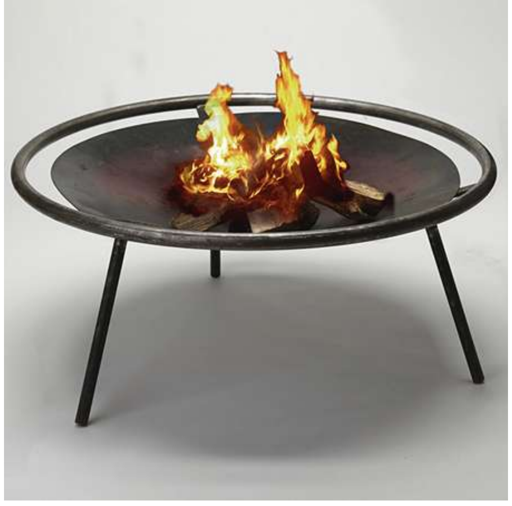
£89.95, The Worm that Turned,
0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk



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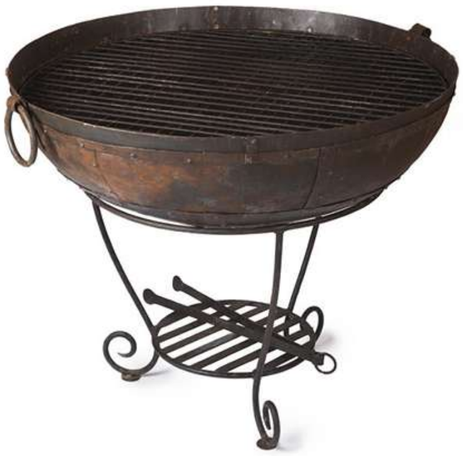

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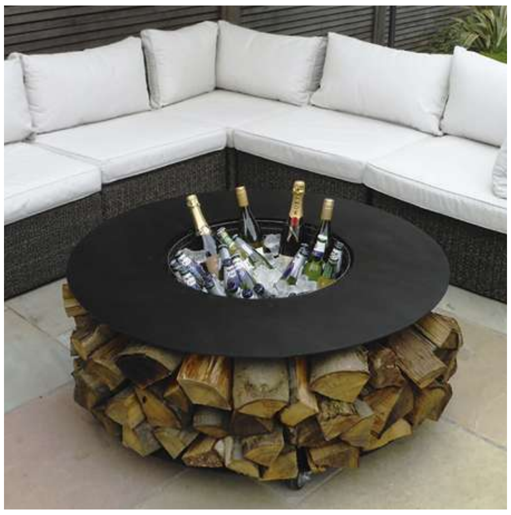

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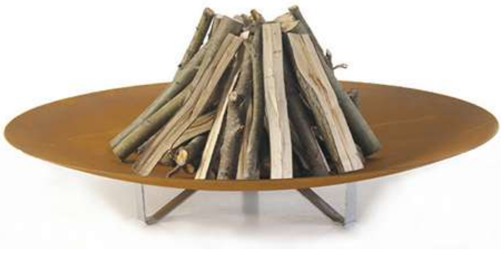

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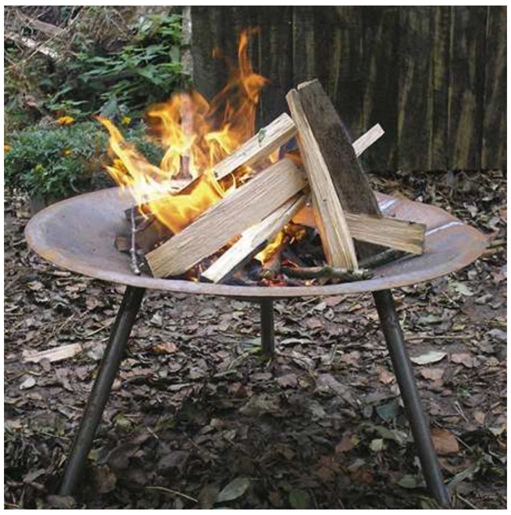

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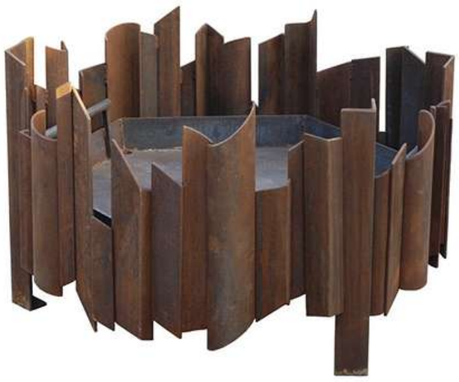

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TESSA TRAEGER

Fern Verrow offers plenty of comforting recipes to warm you through winter, such as these root vegetables roasted in fruit vinegar, see page 103.

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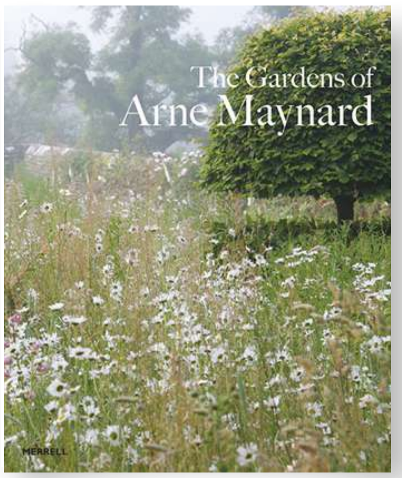

THE GARDENS OF ARNE MAYNARD

By Arne Maynard, foreword
by Rosie Atkins

Merrell Publishers, £45
ISBN 978-1858946269

An indulgent combination of glorious photography and inspiring text, presenting 12 of Arne Maynard's greatest gardens.

Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

'My very earliest memories are of gardening,' writes Arne Maynard in the introduction to his sumptuous new book. 'My early passion was definitely for horticulture over design, and this deep love of the act of gardening has never abated.'

His enthusiasm for both the art and the craft of gardening illuminates every page of this inspiring book, as he describes in fascinating detail the creation of 12 exceptional gardens. They range in style from an 18th-century mill in Wiltshire to a contemporary beach house in East Hampton, New York state, and include Arne's former home at Guanock House in Lincolnshire and his current garden, Allt-y-bela in Wales. They are all different, but each bears the distinctive hallmark of Maynard's work – absolutely at one with their surroundings.

'The structure of the garden has to "hold hands" with the environment, respecting the architecture of the house and the setting, the climate and the culture,' he explains at the outset. The following chapters then form a case study, demonstrating the practical application of these abstract principles, giving a rare insight into Arne's thought process, from his analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the site to his rationale for each beautiful, finished design.

Interspersed throughout there are sections devoted to the 'essential' elements of a Maynard garden – roses and kitchen gardens; borders, topiary and, above all, the craftsmanship without which no design could be realised. 'I design gardens that are intended to BE gardened.'

The lush photographs taken by William Collinson (Arne's partner of some three decades) are first class, and Arne writes with a quietly infectious passion for his work that will leave you lusting after well-oiled gate latches, evocatively named old roses and a garden perfectly in tune with its surroundings.

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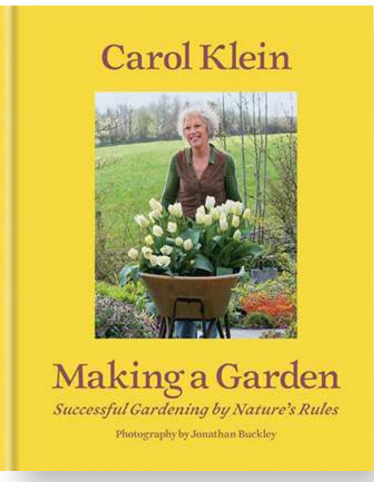
RRP £45. **Reader offer price £41.50** including p&p*.


Carol Klein
Making a Garden
Successful Gardening by Nature's Rules
Photography by Jonathan Buckley

MAKING A GARDEN: SUCCESSFUL GARDENING BY NATURE'S RULES

By Carol Klein, photography by
Jonathan Buckley

Mitchell Beazley, £25
ISBN 978-1845337971

A plea to observe closely what works in our varied native countryside and transfer those rules into our gardens.

Reviewer Caroline Beck is a garden writer and cut flower grower.

This is a sunny book, from its bright-yellow cover to the message it conveys – that gardening can be a joy and not a chore if we take our wild places as an inspirational template. The acclaimed plantswoman Carol Klein has wanted to write this book for a long time, and it has clearly been a patient exercise of pleasurable scrutiny.

The six chapters titled 'Woodland', 'Seaside', 'Exposed', Hedgerow', 'Wetland' and 'Meadow', detail how the components of a natural setting define the combination of plant growth and their performance, and how you can then use these observations to plant a garden.

It's 'common sense' Carol declares, but even for experienced gardeners, the temptation to bend plants to your will can be overwhelming, but it rarely results in a comfortable outcome.

A six-times Chelsea gold medal-winner for her nursery, Glebe Cottage Plants, in Devon, the word of Carol Klein has great authority. Although now closed, it's clear the nursery has played a huge part in supplying material for her book. The planting of the potting shed roof for example, which Carol describes 'as a viable community that needs little intervention' and 'can be an oasis for wildlife and a huge pleasure for us to enjoy'.

Drawing on knowledge from talented gardeners from both urban and rural backgrounds, and using luminous, naturalistic photographs from Jonathan Buckley, Carol inspires you to look at 'problem' areas in a fresh light.

At the end of each chapter is a thoughtful Plant Directory and although it could have included several hundred choices – it must have caused her agony, like championing one child over another – her selection of plants are both beautiful and obtainable. This is a book that has something to teach every gardener.

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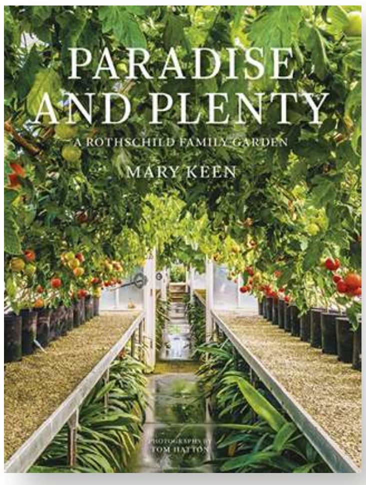

PARADISE AND PLENTY: A ROTHSCHILD FAMILY GARDEN

By Mary Keen, photography
by Tom Hatton

Pimpernel Press, £50
ISBN 978-1910258125

A beautifully produced account of the Rothschild family garden at Eythrope, where gardening continues in a grand manner.

Reviewer Ambra Edwards is a garden historian and writer.

Twenty years ago, writer and designer Mary Keen promised her husband she would never write another book. Her involvement at Eythrope has caused her to break her word – resplendently.

In the charmless age of the Kindle, this is a welcome reminder of how beautiful an object a book can be. Tom Hatton's photographs – both colour and black and white – are seductive: especially glorious is a range of fold-out spreads depicting the same scene at different seasons. The paper is heavy and glossy, the layout elegant and spacious; there are decorative endpapers and silken bookmarks – all admirably in keeping with the subject, which is gardening done as it used to be done, as well as it can be done, with no effort or expense spared.

At Eythrope, once the dower house for the Rothschild's Waddesdon Manor, head gardener Sue Dickinson continues to garden in the tradition of the Great Country House, not only providing awe-inspiring splendour, but raising the thousands of plants required for the estate's lavish bedding schemes and maintaining historically accurate herbaceous borders as well as special collections of nerines, salvias and snowdrops.

The scale is jaw-dropping and Dickinson is resolute in her pursuit of perfection, thinking nothing of losing two thirds of the grape harvest, so that every bunch shall be flawless.

In recording gardening techniques that have all but disappeared – or that have been researched, adapted and revived – Keen's book offers a timely historical record. But it is also an inspiring account for anyone who gardens, of how to do things really, really well.

This book, alas, isn't cheap. But then, to quote a latter-day Rothschild, perfectionism is a costly habit.

Book offer

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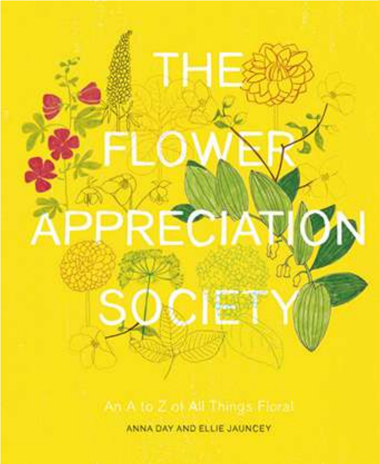
THE FLOWER APPRECIATION SOCIETY
An A to Z of All Things Floral
ANNA DAY AND ELLIE JAUNCEY

THE FLOWER APPRECIATION SOCIETY: AN A TO Z OF ALL THINGS FLORAL

By Anna Day and Ellie Jauncey

Sphere Books, £20
ISBN 978-0751557718

A fun and fresh look at the creative work of floristry with some unusual yet intriguing projects to follow at home.

Reviewer Alys Hurn is the editorial assistant at Gardens Illustrated

Florists Anna Day and Ellie Jauncey are very clear on defining their first book together as 'not your average floristry book'. It brings together Day's background in illustration and Jauncey's in textiles to create a fun, sketchbook-style collection of floristry-inspired, how-to projects, covering everything from choosing the perfect display jar to creating headdresses and even sharing their favourite hand cream.

One of the main delights is Day's illustration of individual flowers. These are simple yet effective and although the accompanying description is limited, it is enough to help beginners start choosing flowers for their own floristry projects and learn some basic tips on how to keep them looking fresh and long lasting. However, some of the illustrations have frustratingly been positioned over the centrefold.

Instructions for their step-by-step projects are clear and paired with a creative mix of hand-drawn illustrations and photography. However, as you make your way through the book, these become a tad repetitive and themes often reappear.

This is largely down to the A-Z set up, which though quirky is a bit limiting. In places, it hinders the effectiveness of the book as a whole as some features would do well grouped together but as they are divided up alphabetically, you find yourself flicking back and forth between pages. That said, the system offers a challenge to the authors to explore less obvious ideas, such as the wonderful profiles of Covent Garden traders, which offer a unique insight into the people behind one of the UK's largest flower markets.

As someone who knows very little about floristry, this book offers a fun introduction into the world of the florist and as it promises, 'there is something here for everybody'.

Book offer

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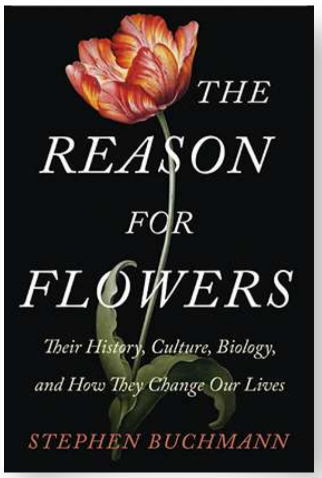

THE REASON FOR FLOWERS, THEIR HISTORY, CULTURE, BIOLOGY, AND HOW THEY CHANGE OUR LIVES

By Stephen Buchmann

Scribner, £18.99
ISBN 978-1476755526

A punchy, readable but erudite little book that introduces many key aspects of plant science to the general reader.

Reviewer Noël Kingsbury is a writer and plantsman.

Flowers are central to our idea of the garden. Our tendency to take them for granted has been shaken of late by a growing awareness of the threats to pollinator populations. This book starts off with a fascinating discussion about the intricacies of the relationship between bees, other insect pollinators and flowers. The author is a 'pollination ecologist' so this is his home ground and where he writes with the most knowledge and enthusiasm. It is a good way into an ambitiously comprehensive overview of flowers and our ongoing relationship with them.

From the natural history of floral ecology we are then led on to look at the role flowers have played in human history and contemporary culture. So much ground is covered that much of this content comes across as rather superficial especially since there is a great gaping hole in the natural history content of the book – there is almost nothing about wind-pollinated flowers borne by grasses, sedges and the overwhelming majority of temperate zone trees.

The book then takes us on a tour of the global floristry industry; considering edible flowers and perfumery before moving on to look at the cultural role of flowers. This includes the arcane Victorian 'Language of Flowers', flower symbolism in literature and flowers in art. Oh, and somewhere in there are a few paragraphs on flower arranging. The book finishes up with a consideration of how we have perhaps co-evolved with plants.

This would have been a far better book if the author had stuck to his home ground and concentrated on the natural rather than cultural history. However, the thorough bibliography will enable the reader to follow up those parts that interest them most.

Book offer
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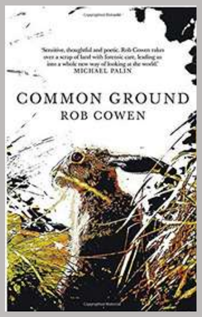

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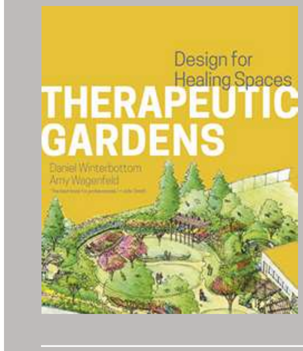

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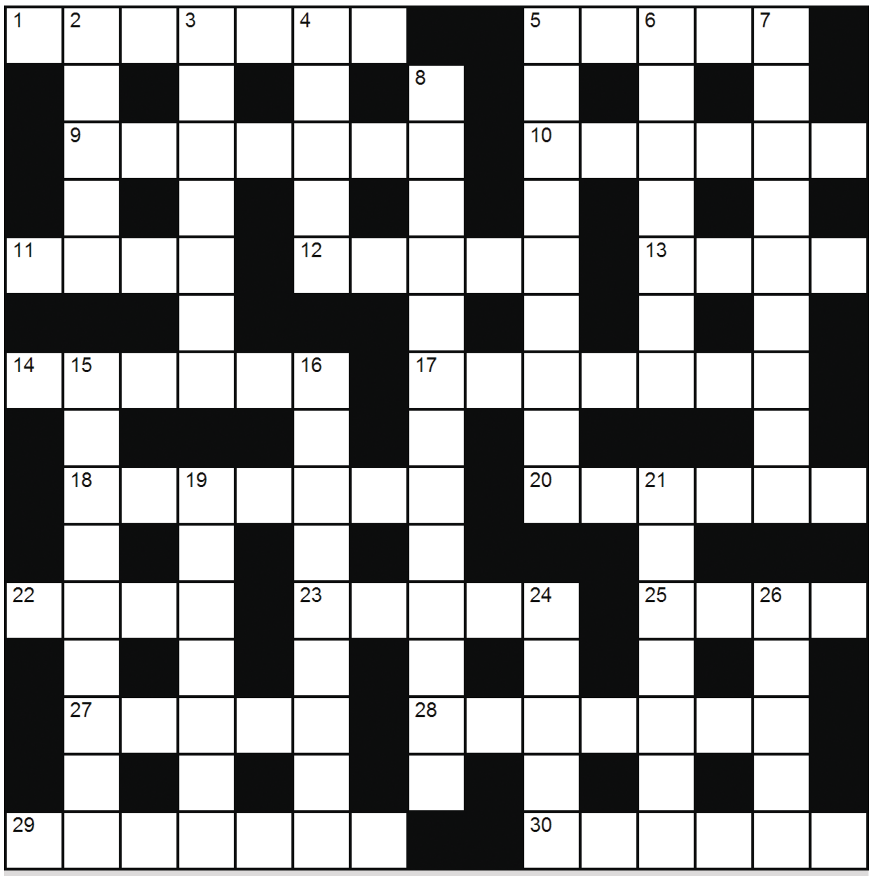

ACROSS
1 Feathery, like astilbe flowers – choice rose beheaded (7)
5 Paving stones collections we hear (5)
9 A group of giant-sized poppies – in Mongolia thicket (7)
10 Hardy companion, sweet bay? (6)
11 A branched inflorescence, part of lacy *Meconopsis* (4)
12 Wood nymph – without water, one day (5)
13 Select ground-breaking tool (4)
14 Influential garden designer's nice side, personality-wise? (6)
17 Spikes a lawn, as a tree rocks (7)
18 Swollen seed of mature French bean (7)
20 Fertiliser ingredient's plant container has moved (6)
22 Tree protuberance in bark, notably (4)
23 Turnips, according to the Scots, found in lane, Epsom (5)
25 'Ladies Fingers' all right with artist (4)
27 It's an ancient sort of rose from the East, mate! (5)
28 Erect eg as bluebell stems are – honest! (7)
29 Chap leaves juicy tropical fruits (7)
30 An RHS garden location – lies oddly in Whitby's extremes (6)

DOWN
2 Describes a plant's tall, spindly growth (5)
3 Like mould-covered leaves – marigolds, initially, widely affected (7)
4 Burn-like skin disorder on stored apples/pears (5)
5 Eg lettuces, radishes, endives collectively (5,4)
6 Easter lily flower shape, made by an elephant? (7)
7 Pea pods, say, sadly decease in seasons' extremes (4,5)
8 Possibly, mace 'Sun Rhythm' is the genus of ox-eye daisy and corn marigold (13)
15 'Coneflower' member of Aster family – each a nice re-arrangement (9)
16 Like a narrow, deeply divided leaf – one in twisted liana etc (9)
19 Decaying section of carrot tinged (7)
21 Possibly sought to include right plant containers (7)
24 Mulch material and drinker's aid? (5)
26 Main crop potato with nutty taste – mashed tater! (5)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

OCTOBER'S SOLUTIONS
ACROSS 7 Flower bed **9** Petal **10** Russell **11** Verdant **12** Osier **14** Alder **16** Gum **17** Eckford **20** Anthers **22** Doh **23** Avens **25** Navel **27** Morello **29** Anemone **31** Sybil **32** Naked Lady.

DOWN 1 Bonsai **2** Hebe **3** Abelia **4** Spur **5** Straggle **6** Elatum **7** Fir cone **8** Davidia **13** Rioja **15** Ryton **18** Kohlrabi **19** Die down **21** Silvery **22** Damask **24** Stalks **26** Violas **28** Lily **30** Eddo.

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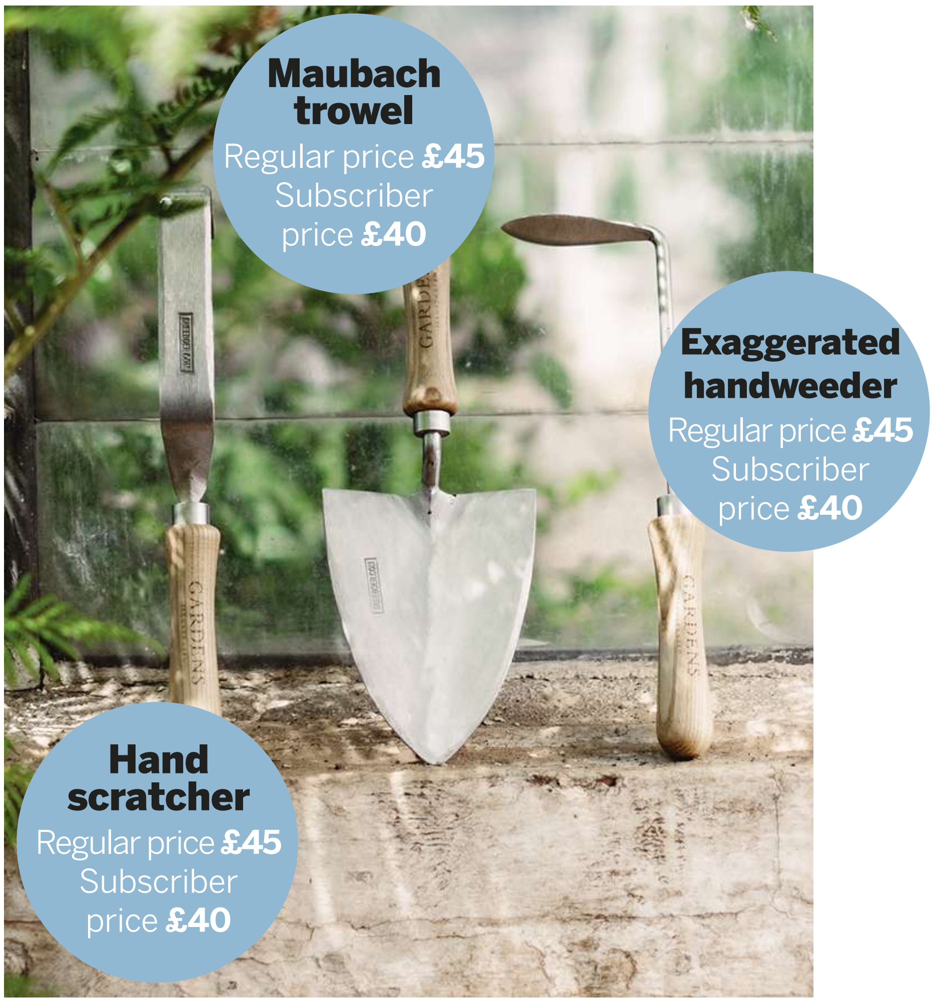
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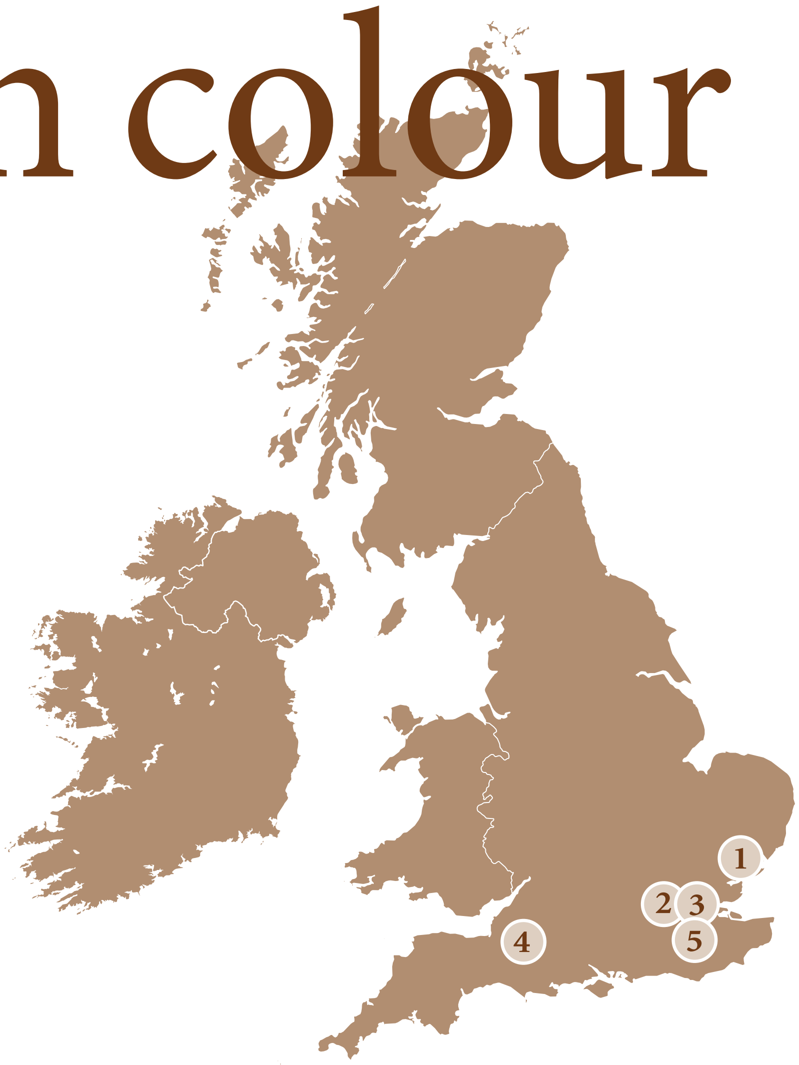

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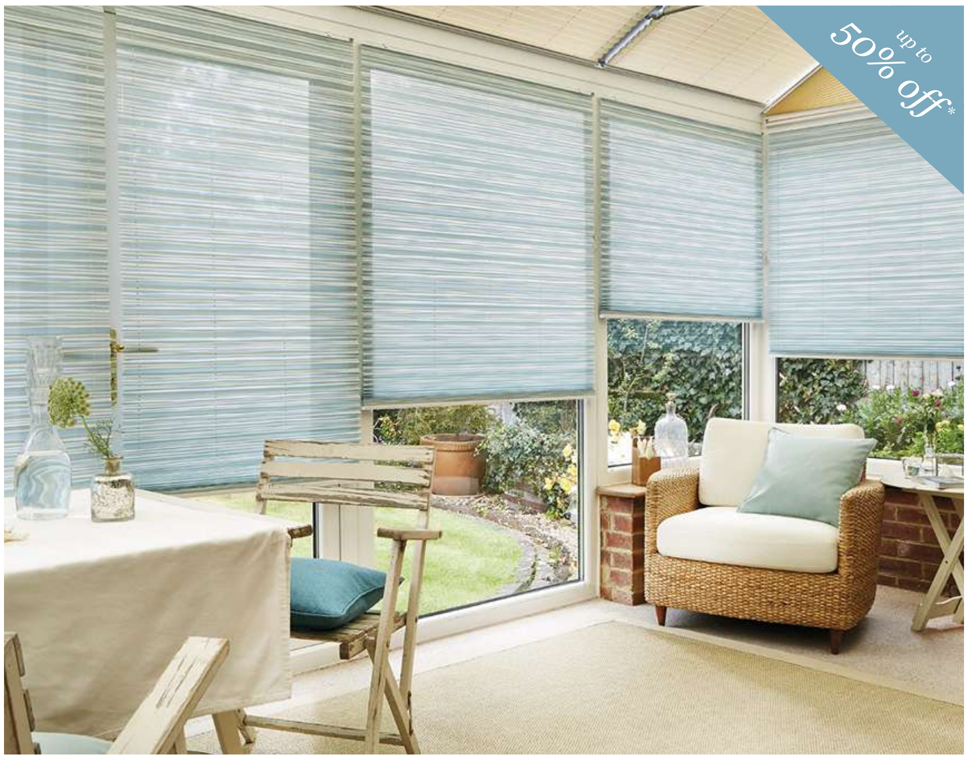

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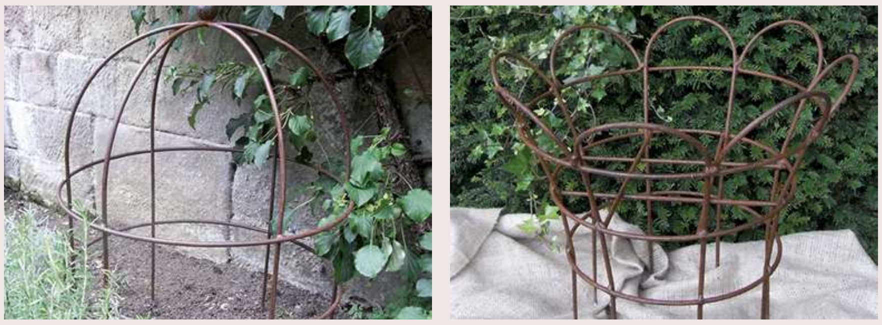

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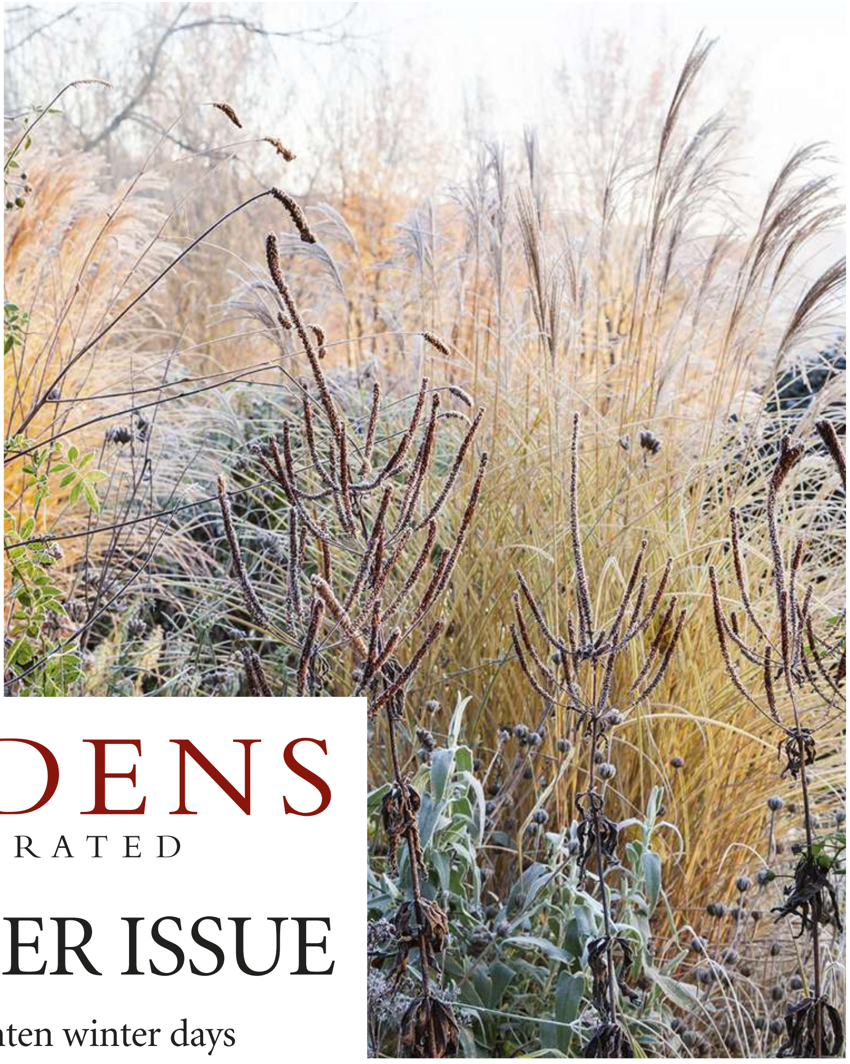

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY, SIETSKE DE VRIES, ANNETTE LEPPLE / GAP PHOTOS

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A new light

Frank decides to admire his winter garden from a different perspective

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **CELIA HART**

In the summer the most beautiful moments are in the morning and the evening, when the angle of the sun is low and everything is lit horizontally. Photographers call it magic light, and it is why you will find them up early or out late, retiring in the flat light of midday to lunch with their models. Lit from the side the opaque becomes transparent and the dull takes on a glow as golden particles in the atmosphere are revealed. It is the best time to be in a garden and looking.

No one looks forward to November; it is the month of death and, you would think, the reverse of gilded summer evenings. But now, long past the equinox and far north of the tropic, with the leaves cleaned away by gale and frost, all the light on clear days is horizontal. Weak and fleeting though the sunshine might be, from now until February every hour of it will bring magic light. That is grasping at a straw perhaps, as one heads into the long winter, but when the straw is *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' you might gasp as you grasp.

You want to be drawn outdoors in the winter; to go and look for things and see and smell whether they are doing what they should

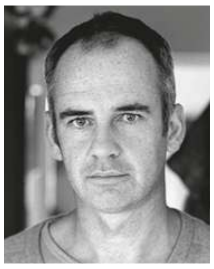
There are few things that you grow for how they look when they are dead, but that grass is one of them. The stiff blond remnants look better, for much of the winter, than the living phase did earlier in the year. I have a long line of it at the back of a border, where it was never intended to remain and where, perhaps, it is not making the most of itself. There is a hedge to the north so that you never see it with the light coming through. I should move it, especially as it has now contracted a morganatic marriage with some couch grass that needs to be annulled.

Rosa sericea subsp. *omeiensis* f. *pteracantha* would be a more fitting match. That is the rose with the giant transparent red thorns (in case the inelegant and unmemorable name meant nothing to you), that glitter like red plastic along the stems in winter sunshine. I planted that in the wrong place also, dumped in the middle of the same border as Karl, but not near enough for them to be doing each other any favours.

The place where they will go is outside a west window, the theory being that on winter afternoons they will sometimes be struck into connubial bliss by illumination and, better yet, be seen from inside. There is a temptation to put all your winter plants to be viewed from the sofa. Aside from the sheer logistics it is not always a good idea. The best winter performers are as much about scent as anything and you won't smell them through glass. More often than not they can be dull in the summer also and you won't want the views blocked by *Chimonanthus praecox* in stolid leaf when it is better to have it lurching from the border at the appropriate time, you having forgotten it was there when it wasn't wanted.

You want to be drawn outdoors in the winter; to go and look for things and see and smell whether they are doing what they should. If you could see nothing from the window you might never be reminded to go looking and miss it all. The weather always seems so much worse from inside than it is when you emerge, so you might be stuck there until March were it not for a few judiciously placed things that can catch the momentary light and make you drop your work and draw you out.

So bloody rose thorns on a golden background it will be. The next window already has a willow (*Salix purpurea* 'Nancy Saunders'), big enough now to take an annual stooling and be an illuminated marvel. I get so little of the English winter these days that I am beginning to miss the subtleties and to realise that even a month like November has its graces. □



Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

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